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# THE FOUNDATION AND THE SUPERSTRUCTURE

OR

## THE FAITH OF CHRIST AND THE WORKS OF MAN

BY

RICHARD MEAD DE MILL

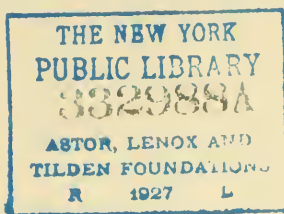
For if there had been a Law given which could have preserved alive, verily the said Righteousness (which entitles a man to Life) would have been from (man himself keeping) Law.—*Gal. 3 : 21*. I live by Faith, (not my Death producing faith, which does not fulfil the Righteousness of the Law, but) that of the Son of GOD, who loved me, and gave himself for me.—*Gal. 2 : 20*. In Him was Life; and the Life was the Light of men . . . (of) every man that cometh into the world.—*John 1 : 4, 9*.

If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. . . . If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.—*1 John 1 : 6, 8*. Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to render to each man according as is his work.—*Rev. 22 : 12*.

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS  
NEW YORK AND LONDON  
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1908

M.S.M.



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IN MEMORY OF  
HENRIËTTA ELIZABETH DE MILL

DAUGHTER OF THOMAS A. AND CAROLINE E. DE MILL  
BORN AUGUST 23, 1821. DIED DECEMBER 16, 1881

---

A wonderfully sweet-tempered and unselfish woman ;—most patient, gentle, forbearing, and forgiving. A model daughter and sister ; blessing her widowed father's house and mine. A sure reliance amid life's cares, a comforter in trouble. In all things performing her duties with steady faithfulness, unobtrusive tact, a constant thoughtfulness for others, and an engaging unconsciousness of self. One who in life would have shrunk from this public praise.

---

A GRATEFUL BROTHER'S LOVING TRIBUTE





## NOTE

This book is published exactly as the manuscript was left at his death by Richard Mead De Mill. Mr. De Mill lived long enough, not only to complete his presentation of the truth as he saw it, but also to make this condensation of the argument so that his thought might have the benefit of a wider circulation. The condensation is published first, but it is intended later to give the more complete argument to the public.

While the author of this book was fortunately able to finish his work, he did not live long enough to superintend its publication. He had therefore no opportunity to read the proofs. It is quite possible that if he had had that opportunity, he would have made some alterations in the text, but his literary executor does not care to take the responsibility of doing so, and in fact sees no necessity for any change. The work, therefore, appears as he left it, even to the note—the evidently unfinished note—to Section 90.

The minute and painstaking care which Mr. De Mill gave to the preparation of his manuscripts was characteristic of the man himself. The study of the scriptures was his keenest pleasure. It became the passion of his life, and for twenty-five years he gave to it the benefit of his legal mind, trained in the sifting of evidence and the exact use of language. And it is in the results of this study, rather than in his labors in his profession, that are to be found his highest claims to grateful remembrance.

R. W. DE M.

SEPTEMBER, 1908.



## PREFACE

A MANUSCRIPT of considerable size, entitled *The Purpose of the Æons*, was completed by me about a quarter of a century ago; although it has been considerably added to from time to time, and over fifteen years ago was re-arranged. This manuscript I have not yet submitted to a publisher. It has struck me, however, that certain matters therein might be made immediately useful, if put before the public in smaller volumes. The outcome of this thought has been the production of several manuscripts besides the one now given to the press. In resorting to this method, of course, I shall lose the advantage of the more thorough treatment of the larger work, and of the association therein, in due order, of a wider range of thought. In this volume I have not attempted to do full justice to such of the truths touched upon as may seem unusual. Desiring of all things to bring its contents before as large a number as possible, it must suffice, if I shall succeed in preparing the way in some degree for the larger work. My object is to enkindle the interest of the reader in the truths herein proclaimed; and, to that end, to let him know that there is a great deal more to be said in their behalf than could be possibly compressed within a little compass. Take, for example, the condensation which

has been exercised in regard to such important subjects as the Unpardonable Sin, and the great work of "the Faith of Christ," upon which St. Paul so loves to dwell, and in regard to which men more misunderstand him at this day than St. Peter declares them to have done in the apostolic age.

But notwithstanding this necessary brevity, which scarcely puts the reader in a position fairly to judge, I would welcome friendly criticism; and I have often sought for it, and in many ways. It is in fact one of the grounds of assurance of the truth of my positions, that hitherto no adverse criticism has been made by any one of the bright minds who have kindly read, in whole or in part, the manuscript of my largest work. And I would be only too glad, before the publication of that work, to have it subjected to a still larger number; but unfortunately I have exhausted my circle of scholastic friends; and the experience of what I have done for others enables me to realise that a critical perusal of manuscripts is a labour of time, and care, and patience, which one ought not to expect, except from those of whose personal interest he is confident, and unto whom he would be glad to render like friendly favours. That I may serve the cause of the God of truth, however, I have been stimulated to spend long years of invalidism in carefully preparing these several manuscripts, when my physical system was demanding outdoor air, and exercise, and recreation. It would be most inconsistent in me, therefore, not to be willing for the sake of holy truth, to subject my positions in regard thereto to the criticisms of those who fear God, and are lovers of that truth. Only, let the criticisms bring what I say to the simple test of the revelations of God,—the revela-

tions, that is to say, both of the Bible and Nature; the latter including, of course, the nature implanted by God within us, and in His own likeness. For, except as revealed, man has no knowledge whatever of the Supreme Being, and of His relations to His creatures; and by the test alone of His revelations to men must all tenets in regard to heavenly truth stand or fall.<sup>1</sup> If then the views which I am upholding can be shown to contravene at all the revelations of God Himself, no one, I trust, will be more ready than I to be so taught. But if only they shall be found to oppose the views of men, that is the very reason why I have been at such pains to give them to the world. For I, and I pray all my readers also, would humbly hearken to the inspired apostle St. Peter when he thus commands: "As newborn babes (or without prejudice) desire the reasonable, *unadulterated* milk (of the word), that ye may grow thereby unto salvation."<sup>2</sup> Or when he consistently tells us, that the sure word of prophecy is the proper lamp for our darkness all through the long night even until the dawn of day; and first, because "every prophecy" is of public and common interpretation;<sup>3</sup> and secondly, was spoken of the Holy Ghost.<sup>4</sup> And I would heed also the

<sup>1</sup> Deut. 29: 29. I am speaking, of course, of strictly heavenly truth which is in its nature beyond the knowledge of man. I freely admit the pertinency of history in such earthly matters as church government, etc.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Pet. 2: 2. See Liddell and Scott, *Greek Lexicon*, as to ἄδολον, above rendered *unadulterated*.

<sup>3</sup> The word in 2 Pet. 1: 20 rendered "private" is always, when so to be rendered, opposed in Greek to that which is public and common. Another idea contained in 1: 20 is, that no prophecy is of one interpretation only. Both ideas may be expressed thus: "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of scripture is of exclusive interpretation." See § 100 (a).

<sup>4</sup> 2 Pet. 1: 19-21.

LORD Himself, when from the height of Heaven after His ascension He commands, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."<sup>1</sup> Or when, during His life on earth, in opposition to both the scholars and the Church, He said to the common people, "Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?"<sup>2</sup> Or when again, in speaking of searching the Scriptures for their testimony of eternal Life through Him, He warned the Jews: "There is one that accuseth you, (even) Moses on whom ye have set your hope. For if ye had believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?"<sup>3</sup> Or when, on another occasion, He in like manner further warns, and with probable reference to Himself and His own resurrection: "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one should rise from the dead."<sup>4</sup> Or when also He declared: "He that is of GOD heareth the words of GOD."<sup>5</sup> Even as Isaiah long before had commanded, saying, "Seek ye out of the Book of the LORD, and read."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Rev. 2: 7, etc.<sup>2</sup> Luke 12: 57.<sup>3</sup> John 5: 45-47.<sup>4</sup> Luke 16: 31.<sup>5</sup> John 8: 47.—"The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the LORD hath made even both of them." Prov. 20: 12.—"O foolish people, and without understanding; which have eyes, and see not; which have ears, and hear not: fear ye not me? saith the LORD." Jer. 5: 21.—"He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." Matt. 11: 15, etc.<sup>6</sup> Is. 34: 16.—"Should not a people seek unto their GOD? . . . To the Law, and to the Testimony! if they speak not according to this word, surely there is no light in them."—8: 19, 20.

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THE  
FOUNDATION AND THE SUPERSTRUCTURE



# The Foundation and the Superstructure

## “CHRIST OUR LIFE”

“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, *Except a* man be born of Water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” John 3: 5.

§1. THE THREE-FOLD ASPECT OF SALVATION.—There are certain truths mentioned and explained further on, which had better be kept in view from the beginning. We commonly speak as if there were but one salvation. Yet are there three things which are necessary to man’s perfection as an intelligent being gifted with free-will, namely, Immortality, Holiness, and Happiness; and therefore, to make man perfect, from the three opposites of these he must be *saved*; or from Death, from Sinfulness, and from Suffering. In this analysis of the three forms of Evil to which man would seem to be liable, the term “Death” is opposed to Immortality, and means Final and Absolute Death, or, practically, the living soul’s annihilation; natural death being regarded as only a form of Suffering.(a)\*

\* Letters refer to notes at the end of the volume.

## 2 The Foundation and the Superstructure

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It is the Salvation from Death, or from the first of these three forms of Evil, which is the gratuitous and wholly exclusive work of God in the Person of our LORD, being a pure Gift of Grace, without any assistance whatever from the Works of Men. Although every Christian reader will probably admit this, and even regard it with me as the fundamental doctrine of Christianity, it will still be the difficult task of this little volume to get each one to be true to his admission, and to carry the doctrine out, as St. Paul did, to its logical conclusion. We all, indeed, recognise the Creator to be the only possible source of Life; and both in respect of the original Gift, and of its Re-creation by our LORD after it had been forfeited through Sin. And yet, in one way or other, theologians of the most opposite extremes of thought persist in confounding the Gift, which they admit to be the pure act of God, with its due Nurture after it has been bestowed; and because of this confusion, they insist upon the Works of Men having also their re-creative effect, and one which is even preliminary and indispensable to the bringing into efficient action the Power of Almighty God! And furthermore they fall into differences with one another as to the proper methods by which men are required to help out the great God, and enable Him to perform His *original* act of Re-creation! They will not see, that however essential individual faith and repentance on the one hand, and obedience to the command to be baptised on the other, may be to the *growth* of our spiritual Life, still, that they must not be confounded at all with the divine *restoration of Life* to sinners as a pure act of Grace. Suffice it, however, at this point to claim, without special argument, that the Salvation



from Death, and the corresponding *renewal of Life* to men, both temporal and spiritual, is, and must be, the exclusive Gift of GOD, entirely apart from, and independent of, any Work of Men, of whatever sort; and that the Work of GOD, moreover, is a finished work, done irrespectively by the irrespectively GOD for all sinners alike, whether believers or unbelievers; or whether baptised or unbaptised; and that, in consequence, *Death has been abolished* for all men, and Life and Immortality brought to light;<sup>1</sup> so that every man is now an immortal being, and cannot finally die. In the very nature of things, not of a man's own will in any way, but, as must be the case with every child, of his father's will was he begotten. So, therefore, in respect of our new Life or birth from GOD "the Father," St. James consistently says, "Of His own will He brought us forth," or (a. v.) "begat He us, by the WORD of Truth";<sup>2</sup> even by that WORD of Truth, who is the Son of GOD. And accordingly St. Paul told the pagan Athenians,<sup>3</sup> we are all His offspring; "having been *begotten again*," says St. Peter, "through the WORD of GOD, who liveth and abideth."<sup>4</sup>

§2. SALVATION FROM SINFULNESS.—But while the Salvation from Death is thus a finished act of Grace, and we have been freely gifted with a new Life which sin has no power finally to destroy, the Salvation from Sinfulness, on the other hand, is by no means a pure matter of Grace; but to obtain it the Works of men are positively and uncompromisingly required. For otherwise, man would at once be deposed from his free-will sovereignty, and degraded into a machine;

<sup>1</sup> 2 Tim. 1: 10.

<sup>2</sup> Jas. 1: 17, 18.

<sup>3</sup> Acts 17: 28, 29.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Pet. 1: 23.

## 4 The Foundation and the Superstructure

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while God would become, contrary to what inspiration declares of Him, one who repents of His gifts,<sup>1</sup> and over men would be no more a KING of *kings* and LORD of *lords*, but of them would become, instead, a mere machine-maker, and altogether the Doer of all the machine's acts;—if it prays to Him, the Author of the prayer, and if it praises Him, the One who praises Himself; and where it neglects to pray or praise, and works out what we otherwise would call sin, the One who respects persons, and causes all the differences in the machines! As all this could never be, it follows, as the Bible teaches, that the free will of man is inviolable, and that it is for him to work out his own Salvation from Sinfulness with fear and trembling;<sup>2</sup> the Holy Spirit stimulating and guiding, but never coercing. And so, because the Divine Grace may not consistently do away with Sinfulness, as it did with Death, the one Sacrifice, which did away with the latter, is removed to heaven, to allow of the coming of that Divine Reprover who brings with Him no pardon for our sinful condition, but will severely “guide into all truth.” The Blessed Spirit therefore becomes a Reprover of Sinfulness, instead of a pardoning Sacrifice therefor. To use the words of our LORD, “He will reprove the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment”;<sup>3</sup> duly administering not Death, indeed, from which we have been delivered, but “Judgment” according to our deeds; whether it be the deeds of Sinfulness on the one hand, or of Righteousness on the other. Hence, in Sinfulness we have that one Sin for which no sacrifice can be offered, and no pardon obtained; in respect of which, indeed, the Sacrifice for Sin has been removed, and a Reprover substituted;

<sup>1</sup> Rom. 11: 29.

<sup>2</sup> Phil. 2: 12.

<sup>3</sup> John 16: 7-15.

for which, accordingly, St. John declares, he will not say that we should even pray; <sup>1</sup>—a sin the removal of which is clearly “behind of the afflictions of Christ” in the taking away of the sins of the world; “behind,” because, verily, it is left for royal man to do his voluntary part in its eradication; even to “fill up that which is behind”; <sup>2</sup>—in short, the *Unpardonable Sin against the Holy Ghost*, whose office it is to lead man on to the work of its eradication, and who must reprove, because He may not exercise compulsory Grace. <sup>3</sup> Hence, with all consistency we are told, that as a Comforter “the world” —an expression which denotes the evil natures of all mankind, and includes all imperfection in ourselves or others —cannot receive Him. <sup>4</sup> For how may He comfort, where He may not pardon; and where, in truth, according to the need, He must judge? (a) In consequence, unlike the Salvation from Death, the Salvation from Sinfulness is dependent upon the Works of men, and is still in the future, and only possible through the free-will of the individual to be saved; as is the visible teaching of every day’s experience. On this subject how solemn and unmistakable is the assurance of the very One who is the only Sacrifice for Sin. Says our LORD: “I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just.” <sup>5</sup> In such plain words does He tell us that His blood may not wash away that one sin, to do which would interfere with man’s inviolable sovereignty of will; and that, inasmuch as He may not be a Sacrifice to obtain its pardon, He must become its Judge, and according to its due measure. For it is, He adds, the Father’s

<sup>1</sup> 1 John 5: 16.    <sup>2</sup> Col. 1: 24.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. 12: 30-37.    Ex. 23: 20, 21.

<sup>4</sup> John 14: 16, 17.

<sup>5</sup> John 5: 30.

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will;—aye, for the good Father would have His children gods, and not machines;—and so, however much He who came to die for men yearned to deliver them from Sinfulness and Suffering, nevertheless He would do the Father's will. And thus do we find the Triune GOD,—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,—solemnly pledged to the unmitigated judgment of Sinfulness, according to its degree.

§3. SALVATION FROM SUFFERING.—In regard to the Salvation from Suffering, it must be remembered, that the sole object of the reproofs of the Holy Spirit, who only resorts to reproof, because He may not pardon, is to “guide into all truth.” “For,” we are told, “the LORD will not cast off for ever. For though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies. For He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.”<sup>1</sup> And accordingly our Saviour declares, “He that believeth in Him (that is, who believes, among other things, in the exact truth of what He utters, and that the judgment of GOD will extend even to the idle word,<sup>2</sup> and who acts pursuant to his belief) is not judged”; and for the very good reason, as the Divine Speaker goes on to show, that there is nothing in him to condemn. He doeth truth; his deeds being “made manifest, that they are wrought in GOD.”<sup>3</sup> In other words, Suffering is one of the means by which we are stimulated and guided in our Work. We are made perfect through Suffering.<sup>4</sup> And so, when the end is fully attained, there ceases to be a reason for the existence of Suffering in the universe of the GOD of Love.

<sup>1</sup> Lam. 3: 31-33.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. 12: 36.

<sup>3</sup> John 3: 18-21.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Pet. 5: 10; 4: 13. Heb. 2: 10. Rom. 8: 18-22.

Hence, with the exact consistency which always marks the words of our LORD, He tells us that the believer in Him, or the man of perfect faith and corresponding deeds, is not judged. There is none of that Sinfulness in Him which may not be pardoned. It follows, that as Suffering has only a purpose of love, the infliction thereof is regarded in the Bible as the veritable proof of the Love of God,<sup>1</sup> or by no means as a mere weapon of the devil. And in harmony with this, in the parable at the beginning of the Book of Job, we are mercifully taught that Satan may not lift his hand for evil against a man, without the previous permission of the Most High; and that the measure of the evil is rigidly prescribed. It thus becomes a matter of course, that with the Salvation from Sinfulness effected, that from Suffering will be also obtained. "For His anger is but for a moment; in His favour is Life: weeping may tarry for the night, but joy cometh in the morning."<sup>2</sup> As David sings again, "The LORD is full of compassion and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide; neither will He keep His anger for ever."<sup>3</sup> (a)

§4. SALVATION FROM SINFULNESS AND SUFFERING AN INDIVIDUAL MATTER.—It will thus be seen that one of the three salvations has been already obtained, and was the free work and gift of God in Christ; and that the other two are yet to be obtained, and are dependent upon the Works of each individual in effecting his Salvation from Sinfulness. We are already immortal, but are still in a state of Sinfulness and

<sup>1</sup> Heb. 12: 5-13. Ps. 119: 75. Prov. 3: 11, 12. Deut. 8: 5. Rev. 3: 19. Job 5: 17, 18.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. 30: 5.

<sup>3</sup> Ps. 103: 8, 9.

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Suffering. If we may apply the words of *The Revelation*, "The one Woe is past; behold, there still come two Woes hereafter."<sup>1</sup> If, indeed, Final Death had overtaken us, there would have been truly but "the one woe." But because it was not suffered to do so, for that very reason "there still come two woes hereafter." Many Christians look upon Christ as saving them from the judgment according to deeds; little realising that it is His very Salvation of us all from the common and instantaneous judgment of Final Death which has brought upon us, respectively, the judgment according to deeds; and that He is Himself the Judge by whom it is administered. We ignore what the long experience of life should fasten upon our memories; namely, that the wounds of the soul are no more easily or speedily healed than the wounds of the body;—nay, less so;—and that in both cases alike it is we ourselves who must apply the remedies which are freely furnished of Almighty GOD. Although we repent and have faith in our LORD, that repentance and faith have not worked a perfect cure, until it becomes impossible for us to sin any more;<sup>2</sup> and surely that faith in Jesus cannot be perfect, which does not believe His repeated statements that He always and most impartially judges us according to our deeds. However, repentance and faith are themselves works or deeds; and when perfect, result in perfect deeds; so that the judgment according to *deeds* becomes in all strictness only a judgment according to *needs*. If we realise these things in all their various bearings, we shall have to discard all theological opinions which stand in the way of our perceiving that the First Coming of the Son of GOD to save the

<sup>1</sup> Rev. 9: 12.

<sup>2</sup> I John 3: 9.



world from Death implies and necessitates His immediate Second Coming to judge the world according to the deeds of its prolonged Life. As He Himself says, "Now is the judgment of this world,"<sup>1</sup>—even the æonic "now"; that is, from æon to æon, or from *life to life*. And again: "He that believeth not is judged already."<sup>2</sup>

§ 5. THE THREE SALVATIONS—FOUNDATION AND SUPERSTRUCTURE.—The three salvations when obtained may be compared to a completed "mansion" occupied by a happy tenant.<sup>3</sup> First, the "Foundation" is laid by Him alone by whom only it could be laid, namely, Jesus Christ. Then the Superstructure is reared thereupon by the personal labours and sufferings of the expectant owner; and according as he builds, so is his reward; his worthless material of "wood, hay, stubble," being all destroyed; and his "gold, silver, precious stones," carefully preserved.<sup>4</sup> And finally, when the Superstructure, so reared, shall be pronounced safe and durable and in all respects complete by the Heavenly Judge, the occupant is joyfully admitted to his abode. The Foundation, it will be perceived, is of a dual nature, to wit, the Salvation from Death effected by our Lord, in doing away by His blood with the normal penalty of Sin, and, next, the sending of the Holy Spirit. The Superstructure, when completed, is the Salvation from Sinfulness, accomplished through the repentance and faith of the individual saved. And the consequent admission into the heavenly mansion is the Salvation from Suffering. To designate, respectively, the Foundation

<sup>1</sup> John 12: 31.

<sup>2</sup> John 3: 18.

<sup>3</sup> John 14: 2.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. 3: 8-17. 2 Tim. 2: 19-21.

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and the Superstructure, St. Paul is rich in diversified nomenclature. It is, in particular, what he understands, on the one hand, by "Faith," meaning the Work done through "the Faith of Jesus Christ," whereby is shone forth "the Righteousness of God"; and on the other, by "Works," meaning those of men; the purpose of the distinction being, to represent that it is the former, and not the latter, which must effect man's Salvation from Death, and obtain for him the indwelling Spirit; and that, on the contrary, it is not Grace, or the Faith of Christ, but the Works of men, stimulated by the indwelling Spirit and by non-compulsory judgments, which must effect the Salvation from Sinfulness.

§ 6. SALVATION AND DEATH BEFORE AND AFTER CHRIST.—There is one more thing, growing out of what has been stated, which I would have the reader clearly understand from the beginning. It is the important difference between Death as the Wages of Sin before and after the great work of our LORD in giving Life to the world. Before that work, the normal wages of Sin was absolute and final Death irrespectively to all. It was the total annihilation of all sinful *Life*, and is what is properly meant when it is said, that we "were by nature children of wrath." We were altogether under the wrath of the strict law of GOD; being, as it were, or under the law, dead through our trespasses and sins.<sup>1</sup> For Sin could not be allowed to defile the universe of the omnipresent GOD. Before His holy eye no evil should be permitted to exist. The necessity from this arising for an *immediate* new gift of Life to the sinner to preserve his existence is

<sup>1</sup> Eph. 2: 1-5.



obvious. And it is for this reason, with the usual, supernatural harmony of the Christian system, which takes such wonderful note of every detail, even though the deliverances of truth came through humble, ignorant fishermen, that we are repeatedly told, how our Salvation from Death was effected by anticipation long before the creation of free-will beings, and long before their consequent liability to fall;—how the Lamb was “slain from the foundation of the world”;<sup>1</sup> or how we were redeemed “with the precious blood of Christ as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot: who was provided indeed before the foundation of the world, but was manifested in the latest times for” us.<sup>2</sup> It is owing, accordingly, to the merits of the Cross having been efficient from the beginning of man’s existence upon earth, that the race has been preserved alive; and it follows, that there never was a time when man was actually in the state by nature, to be a child of wrath, and therefore to be exterminated. He has always been sheltered from Final Death underneath the everlasting arms,<sup>3</sup> through God’s mercy in Christ. What then have the merits of man, and the external ceremonies prescribed to him under the providence of God, to do with the great work of the Son of God which those ceremonies are intended to illustrate? We have been saved from Death by anticipation, irrespectively, and “born anew,” or gifted with new Life, from the foundation of the world, or ages before a single external ceremony was instituted, or a single human being was born. And the Son of

<sup>1</sup> Rev. 13: 8.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Pet. 1: 18–20. See also Rom. 8: 29; 16: 25, 26. Eph. 1: 4, 5, 9–11; Col. 1: 26. See § 95.

<sup>3</sup> Deut. 33: 27.

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GOD came therefore in later time, simply to complete or manifest in act what He had already done by anticipation. Is there anything that can more vividly show forth the vanity of man in imagining that he can do aught to give potency to the great regeneration of mankind by the Son of GOD? The need of a new Life by sinners was duly foreseen and provided for from before even the time that it was needed.

§ 7. SALVATION AND THE FIRST AND THE SECOND DEATH.—Since then Final Death has been caused to be from the first as though it had never been, or at least will in due time only overtake the “old man” of sin within us, and never the new,—who, indeed, “cannot sin, because he is born of GOD,”<sup>1</sup>—we must distinguish between the Death from which we have been saved, and that which has succeeded to it, and *is now* the wages of Sin. What other can this be in respect of those who are immortal than our existing condition of imperfection and suffering under which we now groan and travail? How often it is referred to in the Bible as a state of Death! and how it differs from normal Death, in that it is a *living* Death, whose conscious horrors are prolonged! Because, indeed, it is altogether a different sort of Death from the other, and yet, as the present wages of sin, is the actual successor to and substitute for the other, it receives at times in the Bible the title of “the Second Death.”<sup>2</sup> Like the old Death, it is common to all that sin; but yet is a second sort of Death again, in that it differs from the other in degree, in its application to the respective

<sup>1</sup> 1 John 3: 9.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. 2: 11; 3: 1; 1\* 18; 20: 14, 15; 21: 8. Jude 12. Matt. 8: 22.

sufferers; being a judgment strictly according to deeds,<sup>1</sup> and not precisely the same judgment upon all alike without regard to their differing merits or delinquencies. From this it will be seen, that the Cross of Christ, instead of saving us from strict justice, as is the common error, actually brings it upon us;—nay, that strict justice is only possible through “eternal redemption” from the old Death, and the consequent prolongation of our lives for ever; that thus at all times it may be duly administered. Well, therefore, may St. Paul cry out against those who fail to grasp the Christian idea, and would distort the truth by him declared. The apostle supposes them to ask, as doubtless many in his day did ask, “Shall we continue in Sin, that Grace may abound?”<sup>2</sup> In view of the horrible misconstructions which are still put upon St. Paul’s writings, the question is practically answered in the affirmative by many a procrastinating soul among us. But those who realise as they should, that it is even Grace which brings upon us to the full the judgment according to deeds, have a personal reason, apart from the irreverent audacity of thus desiring our LORD to be the minister of Sin, for crying out in prayerful answer with the apostle, “God forbid.”<sup>3</sup> For just as the old Death was the certain wages of Sin, so certain is the Second Death; *and as immediate*, to him who persists in his Sinfulness; and it is our just LORD himself who surely brings the judgment thereof upon us, and in full measure.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Rev. 22: 10–20.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. 6: 1.

<sup>3</sup> Literally, “Let it not be.”

<sup>4</sup> We do not recognise how sure, and immediate, and persistent, is the condemnation of the judgment according to deeds, because, if we did, it would be coercive. Its certainty in these respects is therefore hidden, and becomes, like other spiritual truths, a matter

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§ 8. THE EXISTENCE OF EVIL AND THE LIGHT OF REVELATION.—So strong are the prejudices of preconceived opinions, especially in regard to theological subjects, that it might have been better, perhaps, to have opened the way for the expression of the above truths by considerable preliminary argument. But I have concluded that the reader would follow what I have to say with clearer mind, if he kept in view these things from the beginning; especially if he should be altogether blinded and oblivious to them by reason of the prevailing wide divergences of views. There is certainly lacking among us, in general, a proper apprehension of the Christian system, and of its relation to those great problems which have exercised the brains of religious thinkers of all ages, both of those who had, and of those who had not, the Bible for their guide. The fundamental problem of the *existence* of evil brings into strong light the abortive madness of the human mind when it attempts to find out God by theory, without the aid of revelation. The experience of all the centuries has taught us, that the unaided human intellect can never solve this problem. But I am speaking not so much of the origin, as of the *prolonged existence* of evil. Indeed, we needed not experience to tell us the essential weakness of the human reason in such matters, but only a moment's consideration. For how can man comprehend his Maker, or the fulness, efficiency, and nature of the divine resources? If, surely, we cannot understand how, after an eternal preëxistence of unchangingly non-creative effort, an

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of faith. To the eye of sense it is rather the wicked who are in great prosperity, while the good seem to be the sufferers. See Ps. 73. As it is said, "The day of the LORD so cometh as a thief in the night." 1 Th. 5: 2.

illimitable, unchangeable GOD should for the first time have called into existence a finite creation, although one incapable of doing or suffering evil; then, of course, for the action of a wise, merciful, and all-powerful Creator to result in *prolonged* moral taint and misery, is to add greatly to our unsolvable difficulties. How, pray, can that which is morally marred be suffered by the holy GOD to continue to exist? Even though we may admit the power of a free-will creation to *originate* evil, from whence, pray, does it derive its *renewed Life*, after the taint of evil has cut it off from GOD? Apart from express revelation, how is it possible for the unaided reason to answer this question? In respect therefore of so fundamental a problem, how wholly unsatisfactory have been the wild conceptions and theories of men!—the notion of dualism, for example, which only succeeds theoretically in reducing to utter helplessness the omnipotence, love, and mercy of the good GOD, and in putting against Him one who is more than His match on the side of evil! or of pantheism, which even dares to make Him one with the evil, and a Protean monster! Let the reader then, at the start, fully realise that “the secret things belong unto the LORD our GOD”; and that no argument is worth the making, which is based upon an attempted conception by the finite mind of the Infinite GOD. It is only the “things which are revealed” which belong unto us;<sup>1</sup> and we must take them as we find them, without any attempt to be wiser than that which is written. And we must strictly do this; confining our theories, even as we are absolutely confined in fact, to our own finite sphere. In

<sup>1</sup> Deut. 29: 29.

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all *unrevealed* matters agnosticism is the only true philosophy.

§ 9. THE ORIGIN OF EVIL IN MAN'S FREE WILL.— But in "those things which are revealed," also, let us realise the immense difference between material and spiritual things; and that at best the natural can only faintly shadow forth the supernatural.<sup>1</sup> To us, therefore, on the plane of Nature, the Bible is compelled to speak in parables; and we must accordingly be exceedingly careful how we attach a literal significance to spiritual verities. It is the Bible itself which gives us the caution; telling us with authority that spiritual things must be spiritually discerned and discriminated.<sup>2</sup> It declares plainly, that the letter killeth,—utterly destroys the true idea,—but that the spirit giveth life.<sup>3</sup> And so our LORD says to literalists of every kind, and in everything, that His words are spirit and life,<sup>4</sup> and that He speaks in parables.<sup>5</sup> How many an unbeliever has only illustrated his own folly, by attacking on scientific grounds—is it not laughable?—the great parable at the beginning of the Bible of a perfect creation, and of that creation's subsequent fall! To be consistent, he should also find fault with Æsop, because he said that his animal stalked.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Some argue, from the unvarying laws of matter, the same unvarying laws in the spiritual world. Why is it not as sensible to reverse the process, and argue, from the sovereign spontaneity of the spiritual world, that matter is a free agent? It is simply an argument, in the face of common-sense, that there can be no differences between matter and spirit; but that in all things they are one and the same.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. 2:6-16. 2 Cor. 4:18; 3:6-14.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Cor. 3:6.

<sup>4</sup> John 6:63.

<sup>5</sup> Matt. 13:3, 9-17, 33-35.

<sup>6</sup> But those persons greatly mistake who imagine that unbelievers cannot discern spiritual things. If that were true, no unbeliever



And how many a Christian has in his turn bolstered up the folly of the unbeliever, by himself also reading the parable as literal history! And yet, the only satisfactory solution to a reasonable mind of the facts around us—of the terrible misery and sin with which we are daily confronted—is that GOD created a godlike creation, and even because it was *godlike*, and had a sovereign will of its own,—even because it had been endowed within its own sphere with an *inviolable* sovereignty, which no outside control was to be suffered to mar, and therefore could know evil as well as good,—that it did just what the gift of free-will sovereignty made it able to do, namely, introduced evil, or saw fit to exercise its sovereignty amiss. It disobeyed its Creator, who from the beginning commanded the good, and of itself fell into the evil. What more satisfactory solution than this can there be of the *origin* of evil?—always provided, however, pursuant to the Bible, we make the Adam of its parable to be the designation of ourselves, and of course in some former existence. Said the sacred writer: “This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that GOD created man, in the likeness of GOD made He him; male and female created He them; and blessed them, and called *their* name Adam, in the day when they were created.”<sup>1</sup>

§ 10. THE FALL, REDEMPTION, AND “ÆONIC” JUDGMENT.—And let us here take note of the appropriate

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could ever become a believer. Not so; for all men are gifted with the Spirit; and that Holy Indweller is continually reminding them of their solemn duties and responsibilities; so that they are without excuse. All therefore have the spiritual eye, even as they have spirits, and are held responsible for its use. But like other spiritual or other gifts, the spiritual eye also becomes strengthened or enfeebled, according as it is employed or neglected.

<sup>1</sup> Gen. 5: 1, 2.

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position in the Scriptures of the great supernatural and spiritual parable of Adam and Eve thus placed at the beginning of the Bible; for it is but natural that the statement of a universal death should precede the revelation of a universal restoration to life. We should first learn the spiritual significance of the parable, that "in Adam *all* die," before we further proceed to learn, that "in Christ shall *all* be made alive."<sup>1</sup> And just as the sun which illuminates the world looks back in setting to the eastern horizon from whence he rose, so it is most appropriate again, that in the closing revelations of the Bible the great subject of the fall should come before us with added significance and interest. When one reads among the marvellous revelations of St. John a similar story of the fall of the angels that sinned, following the repeated references to that fall by his fellow apostles, and how the fallen angels were cast down to this very earth of ours,<sup>2</sup> and as St. Jude also expressly tells us, how the LORD hath kept them "in everlasting bonds under darkness for a judgment of a great day,"<sup>3</sup> it is remarkable that one should conclude these latter revelations to be reflecting back light upon the parable which began the Bible, and all of them together to be luminous with

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. 15: 22.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. 12: 4, 7-12. 2 Pet. 2: 4. Jude 6. See Job 4: 18, 19; 15: 14-16. John 8: 44. 1 John 3: 8.

<sup>3</sup> Jude 6. This translation is literal,—not "unto," at least in the sense of "until"; the Greek preposition having no deferring sense. Indeed, to give it that sense is wholly unjustifiable. Moreover, the definite article, twice added in our versions in Jude 6 ("unto *the* judgment of *the* great day"), is not in the Greek. Hence, the passage is made to express the views of the translators, instead of the declaration of St. Jude. Similar mistranslations, changing the sense of scripture, are frequent in the versions, growing out of the misconstruction of the



that which is of the deepest *personal* interest to us all, and to which the most advanced ideas of evolution are in close relation?<sup>1</sup> Certainly it becomes most satisfactory to our minds to know, that the good God who made us has a mercy which endureth forever; and while He may not consistently interfere at all with the inviolable characteristics of our godlike nature, seeing that His gifts are never repented of; still, even because His heavenward calling is never revoked,<sup>2</sup> that He pursues unvaryingly, and in the strictest manner, the only course which is left open to recover us from our fallen condition. That is, among other things, He must administer to us according to our deeds an "æonic judgment,"<sup>3</sup> or a judgment which goes on

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same preposition. According to the correct translation, the bonds indeed are everlasting, because they denote that which pertains to God, or to be always just. The bonds therefore will endure; but "the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation," are only reserved in the bonds and under darkness "for a judgment of a great day." The inference is, that after the great day has ended, they will be restored to "their own habitation," or will "rise again." Matt. 22: 30.

<sup>1</sup> See Rom. 8: 18-23.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. 11: 29.

<sup>3</sup> Heb. 6: 2.—The word *αἰών* (*æon*), so often used in the N. T. in the original Greek, is always a word of time, and normally means *life*, referring to the period. It may denote the life of a person, animal, supernatural being, and, figuratively, of a place, institution, or other thing,—even, at last, of God and of eternity. In very rare, abnormal instances it may refer also to the manner of life. Because of its normal idea of life as a period, with a beginning and an end, the adjective formed from it should have normally the sense of *from life to life*, corresponding to the senses of other adjectives formed from words of time, whether in Greek or English. Thus "daily" means from "day to day," "yearly" "from year to year," etc. But the original and subsequent uses of the word are more thoroughly exhibited in *The Purpose of the Æons*. Suffice it here to say, that in Greek, again and again, things are described as of æonic duration, which have long since passed out of existence; their existence having been *æonic* while it lasted, or continuing

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from life to life, in exact correlation with our changeful condition; (a) "the new man" within each one receiving "æonic life," according to the progress made, and "the old man" corresponding "æonic destruction";<sup>1</sup> the individual being exposed always, until the end is reached, or until the new, immortal Life casts out all mortality,<sup>2</sup> to that "unquenchable," "consuming fire," whose merciful purpose it is, in each one, to burn up the "chaff" or "tares" of the devil's sowing, bundle by bundle;—in other words, to destroy out of every fallen creature all that is evil,—without in the least consuming or coercing the individual himself.<sup>3</sup>

§ 11. EVIL, AND THE BIBLICAL METHOD OF REDEMPTION.—Of course, all this presupposes an existence on our part extending in the past, as well as in the future, from life to life, and therefore rightly termed "æonic." Except in these and similar, somewhat indefinite ways, the Bible would seem to make no revelation of our having had a past history. For in respect of its original, exalted character, followed by what must have been its extreme horrors,<sup>4</sup> the merciful

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from life to life, from generation to generation, from age to age, during the æon of the things spoken of. In Sirac. 43: 6 an æon is just one month, to wit, the monthly periodic cycle, *i. e.*, *life*, of the moon.

<sup>1</sup> 2 Th. 1: 9. Hence, not the momentary and complete destruction of the First Death, but a *continuing* destruction; one which has to endure banishment from the visible presence of the LORD, seeing not the glory, but the terror of His power; or, according to St. Peter, a destruction which *slumbers not*; but the sinner, while destroying, is destroyed; while doing wrong, keeps receiving the wages of wrong-doing (2 Pet. 2: 3, 12, 13 of r. v.).

<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. 5: 4. 1 Cor. 15: 53, 54.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. 3: 15. Matt. 3: 12; 13: 24-30, 36-43.

<sup>4</sup> If Darwinianism be our witness in the *spiritual* sense, they must have been extreme indeed, and terribly prolonged. See

principle of the Bible is, to have us forget what is behind, and reach forth unto the things which are before. Certainly, however, there is no satisfactory solution of an existence in a *fallen* condition, such as the Bible clearly represents ours to be, other than that God originally made us all upright, and that it is we ourselves personally, or not in the person of a remote ancestor, who have sought out the evil.<sup>1</sup> Our natural sense of justice is not satisfied to be told that we have inherited a moral taint, as a sufficient justification of an undesired birth in sin and misery; unless we can add to the declaration that we ourselves have had our full share in the incurring of the moral taint.<sup>2</sup> But if, as the Bible seems to imply, we not only had this share, but even helped to pull one another down, then it becomes not a mere generous act, but a strictly moral debt, demanding full payment, that we should be brought to do our full share in both voluntarily, and also involuntarily, helping to pull one another, as well as ourselves, up to the height from which we have fallen. In other words, it requires the personal fall of a former existence to solve to our satisfaction both the inherited taint and also the fact and the necessity in the world of involuntary vicarious suffering. In this point of view, the upward progress which we are slowly making from low conditions, instead of being in any sense a reproach to the Creator, becomes His glory. For in place of destroying us, His ungrateful enemies, as is our normal desert, He is

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Ps. 36: 6. Eccl. 3: 21. Gen. 1: 20, 21, 24, etc.; 2: 7. (See the Heb. for "living creature" and "living soul," and their substantial identity, in the foregoing texts)—Rom. 8: 18-23.

<sup>1</sup> Eccl. 7: 29.

<sup>2</sup> See Deut. 24: 16. 2 K. 14: 6. Jer. 31: 29, 30. Ezek. 18: 1-4, 20. Gal. 6: 5, 7.

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bringing about our full restoration, with our godlike sovereignty unmarred. Tenderly, too, from time to time, He wipes from the memory each one's horrible past, and keeps before him a hopeful future. Fully preserving in the erring creature all that is godlike, He even gives him the glory of working out his own salvation from his sinful condition. And then, when at last the work is accomplished, it is called the *resurrection*; that is, the rising *again*; and those who rise *again* are said to become as the *angels in heaven*.<sup>1</sup> Clearly, the parables and repeated deliverances of the Bible are not satisfied in the fulness of their meaning, until victory shall have crowned the struggle of the newly begotten Life within us, and "the old man" of sin is burnt up for ever in the consuming fire of GOD'S wrath: and until thereupon the new man, who cannot sin, because he is born of GOD, shall receive his well-fought-for reward. But, moreover, those parables and deliverances do further indicate, that it is sheep who have been "lost" from the *heavenly fold* who will be thus restored; and that He who descended from heaven, leaving the many sheep who were safe in that fold, went out into the wilderness to search with unwavering purpose for the lost *until they were found*; and that, accordingly, in the resurrection of men, it is "the angels that sinned" who are restored, and who become once more "angels in heaven." For how else could the Psalmist sing, "O give thanks unto the LORD; for He is good: for His mercy endureth for ever."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 22: 30. See Luke 2: 34.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. 107: 1. Luke 15: 3-7. Matt. 18: 11-13.

§ 12. REDEMPTION, AND MYSTERY OF CONTINUED EXISTENCE OF EVIL.—Can any one imagine a more satisfactory solution of “the mystery of evil,”<sup>1</sup> than that which the Bible reveals as beginning with a fall, and ending with the creature’s rising again; so that, at the last, without loss to the creature’s godlike nature, all things shall again be in complete subjection to God, and God all in all?<sup>2</sup> And yet, to tell of the fall, and even the future rising again, is no explanation of the whole mystery of the present, continued existence of evil. For however correctly informed we may be as to the *origin* and purposed *final overthrow* of evil, we are none the less unable to understand in what way its existence can be *prolonged*, or why the sinner is not at once utterly destroyed. But if there is to be a purpose of mercy, and full opportunity for reformation, we see the more the necessity for the persistent sinner to obtain in some way, and have preserved, a new Life, in order that his sin may not have its normal result, and that in the progress of time he may be delivered from all Sinfulness, and receive the reward of blessedness. And yet, while we have this clear understanding of the *necessity* of a new Immortal Life, and also of Holiness, the *manner* of our obtaining these blessings cannot be known to us except by revelation from Heaven. In respect of the necessity, then, we cannot but recognise, even if it had not been made a statement of revelation, that the normal and proper wages of sin is, and should be, Death; and that in the very day in which a creature eats of forbidden fruit, his tainted existence should altogether end. As naturally as we would cleanse *ourselves* when defiled

<sup>1</sup> 2 Th. 2: 7.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. 15: 22–28. Eph. 1: 9, 10. Phil. 2: 10, 11; 3: 21.



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with filth, so we cannot but conclude, that from the universe of the omnipresent GOD should be entirely wiped out all that would be offensive to His pure and holy presence. It is, indeed, because of this instinctive realisation of what should be the due fate of sinners, that unto all ages, and in all religions, the *Existence* of Evil has been felt to be a mystery. The *necessity*, therefore, in order for sinners to live at all, of some Redemption from Death, or from that blotting out of existence altogether, which should be the due wages of Sin and Sinfulness;—that is to say, the necessity of a gift to them of a new Immortal Life, after the forfeiture of their old Life;—is a matter which is entirely cognisable by the reason. But when we come to the *manner* in which that necessity is to be *supplied*, or how the needed Life and Immortality are to be gained, reason at once finds itself beyond its depth. It is however a fitting preparation to the better realisation of the supernatural merits of the Bible system to know, that we ourselves with our natural faculties can discern what prime necessity there is for an act of Grace from the GOD of Love, whereby the Life of sinners may be continued in the universe of the pure and holy GOD; and that to obtain this continuance they were utterly helpless in themselves;—in other words, that of pure Grace He, and not they, must effect their Redemption from Death and Restoration unto Life; giving them, indeed, in the face of Sin and Sinfulness, a Life which shall be so clean in His sight as to be no more subject to final Death;<sup>1</sup> thus

<sup>1</sup> And Revelation declares this Regeneration already to have been accomplished. Thus, Tit. 3: 4-7, "But when the kindness and love toward man of GOD our Saviour appeared, not because of works, (to wit), those in righteousness which we have done

abolishing Death, and bringing Life and Immortality to light.<sup>1</sup>

§ 13. REVELATION THE ONLY KEY TO THE SOLUTION.  
 —And yet, apart from Revelation, we cannot know *how* GOD will do this, and at the same time reconcile therewith His awful Justice and Holiness; or how in any respect a defiling sinner can be caused to appear clean and righteous in the sight of Him who cannot tolerate iniquity, and whose frown of Death should wither all uncleanness into non-existence. (a) Nay, we are even told, that it was a mystery to the angels in heaven.<sup>2</sup> And we can well understand how the holy angels must have been exceedingly puzzled, as they looked down from their happy heights upon the protracted duration of all the evil, in so many forms, which was spinning out its miserable existence upon this earth of ours, and which evil must to them have appeared to demand an immediate and everlasting termination. Certainly, however, the mystery is one which, on its divine side, requires the great GOD to be satisfied, and neither angels nor men. The solution of the mystery belongs therefore entirely to Him; while to us it can only be a matter of Revelation; and until the Revelation comes, if even the holy angels

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(whether therefore of faith, penitence, or baptism,) but according to His mercy He saved us (*i.e.*, all mankind), through a washing of regeneration and a renewing of a holy spirit, which He poured out upon us richly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour, that having been justified by His Grace, we should be made heirs, according to hope, of eternal Life." Many high authorities give "should have been made heirs." In either case the idea is the same. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His Grace through the Redemption that is in Christ Jesus."—Rom. 3: 23, 24. And see 5: 18 and 2 Tim. 1: 9, 10.

<sup>1</sup> 2 Tim. 1: 8-10.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Pet. 1: 12. Eph. 3: 9, 10.

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sought in vain for a reasonable explanation, surely it is not for us to attempt to gaze beyond that which is supernaturally written. But the fact of the mystery is before our very eyes. The truth of the continued existence of that which should die cannot be reasonably denied. We are compelled therefore, whether we understand it or not, to believe that some way has been found whereby sinners can live without being so offensive to the holy GOD as to incur the normal judgment of extinction. To repeat, therefore, we realise the *necessity* of a Redemption from Death, and of a Justification whereby we may continue to live, and are thus prepared for the supernatural Revelation as to the Manner How; which we also realise as infinitely beyond our power to discover for ourselves.

§ 14. NECESSITY OF AN INVULNERABLE NEW LIFE.— But before going on to the Manner as revealed from Heaven, let us have some better conception of the Necessity which is comprehensible by man, and in its *dual* aspect as pointed out by the unaided eye of reason. It would seem then to be clearly necessary, that there should be within each fallen creature engendered *not only* a new life, or that we shall be redeemed from Death for sins of the past, *but* a new Life which will nevermore demand to be wiped out by reason of sin; or which is made holy and acceptable unto GOD, and carries with it its constant justification. Such a holy Life, of course, can only be begotten in fallen man by GOD Himself, in whom alone is the Source of all spiritual life. That is to say, our Life must be made invulnerable both as to the past, the present, and the future. In scripture language we must



be "born of Water and the Spirit;"<sup>1</sup> or be both cleansed and made holy, and as freely and as involuntarily as a child is born into the world;—even doing nothing whatever to obtain this Life. How, indeed, we can be thus divinely born, and in a dual sense, we cannot of ourselves discern; but still, it is none the less evident, that only from GOD can Life be derived; and that in some way, which must be satisfactory to Him, the curse of impending Death must be removed, and man be cleansed from his sins, and the future made secure. That every creature owes its entire Life to the Creator, and if it fails to pay the debt, also its Death, shows at once the double necessity for the divine intervention, both in respect of Life and Death. For if the erring creature is to be made immortal, notwithstanding its unpaid debt both of Life and Death, not only can no creature remit the sins of another's past, or confer upon that other Life for the future, but what in any respect can a creature do, however high or holy, even if he does his utmost, more than pay his own debt? If he does his all, he only does his duty.<sup>2</sup> We do not of course understand how the Son of GOD can become man, or how, as man, His holy Life and Death can become the substitute for a sinner's. Enough for us that it is so revealed from the great Creditor to whom our Life and Death were owed. But we do understand that by no less than One who is uncreate, and therefore has not the creature's debt, could the payment of Life and Death be made; and accordingly, that we must be born of a divine cleansing, and with a new holy Life derived from GOD, or of the Divine Water of Life, and of the Divine Spirit; that is, not of earthly things, but of heavenly and Divine. And

<sup>1</sup> John 3: 5.

<sup>2</sup> Luke 17: 10.

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so, by the Power of God alone, to be immortal, we must be redeemed from the Death due to the past, or be washed clean from all offences, and, in addition, must be made so holy and righteous, as nevermore to incur the due wages of sin. Thus our reason clearly perceives a *dual necessity* in order for us to attain immortal Life: first, that there shall be a Redemption from Death, or cleansing like as of water, because of the past, or because of Sin and its wages; and, next, that, in respect of the present and the future, there must be a Justification of Life. That is to say, there must be begotten within every sinner, by the only Source of Life, a new, clean Life, which cannot sin, because it is begotten of GOD.<sup>1</sup> He Himself must become our Father, and to be His children, we must inherit a righteousness which is of Him, and is freely given to all alike.

§ 15. REDEMPTION AND MAN'S DUAL NATURE.—But if this were all, we should be dangerously near the border line of coercion,—indeed, in order to ensure our godlike holiness, would seem to have been deprived of our godlike sovereignty of will. The miserable and sinful facts of our being assure us, however, that this is not so. There is in every man, in truth, notwithstanding his regeneration, the unmistakable evidence that “the old man” within him has not been coercively destroyed; or that each one has, verily, two diverse spiritual natures, or a dual existence, in a spiritual sense, of which he will be distinctly conscious on turning his thoughts within. He will find there, in particular, two distinct wills, the moral and the immoral, in more or less constant and vigorous warfare,

<sup>1</sup> 1 John 3: 9. See §§ 15a, 124 and 124b.

according as the one or the other has been suffered to become dominant. The one is always on the side of right, and belongs of course to the new Life, which is the child of God. The other loves the evil, and evidences as plainly its proper paternity. "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil."<sup>1</sup> Most theologians divide men into two classes; but the least introspection confirms the Bible in making the spiritual duality to be within each individual; and the daily facts of human life will further confirm the Bible in demonstrating that the new man within us, which is the child of God, was not created by baptism, any more than that the old man of "nature," which was born in sin, and is the child of wrath and of the devil, was destroyed thereby.<sup>2</sup> It was the sad consciousness of this dual existence which caused the baptised St. Paul to cry out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"<sup>3</sup> When we fully realise both the wheat and the tares to be within ourselves, or that we are both children of God and of the devil, and that the tares may not be coercively cast out, without uprooting also the free-will wheat,<sup>4</sup> we shall, perhaps, have taken out of us some of the detestable spirit of thinking ourselves better than others, merely because of our theology, and shall the more deeply feel the necessity of each one working out his own Salvation from Sinfulness with all fear and trembling.<sup>5</sup> It was not without point that the devil in the parable is made to tell Adam that he should know

<sup>1</sup> 1 John 3: 8-10.

<sup>2</sup> The sacraments are means of grace or help; but are neither creative nor coercive. They are properly signs. To use our Lord's language of one of them, it "shows forth"—*i. e.*, reminds, teaches.

<sup>3</sup> Or rather, "this body of death." Rom. 7: 24.

<sup>4</sup> Matt. 13: 24-30, 36-43.

<sup>5</sup> Phil. 2: 12.

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himself to be as a god by disobeying his Maker; for the act of disobedience did certainly assure him of the complete possession of a godlike sovereignty of his own, in that he could do as he pleased, even to the putting himself in opposition to the sovereignty of his GOD, to know evil as well as good. (*a*)

§16. REDEMPTION AND THE IRRESPECTIVE NATURE OF GOD.—But in its conclusions respecting the necessity of the new birth of Water and the Spirit, or of the Redemption from Death and the Justification unto Life, the reason cannot logically ignore the irrespective nature of GOD;—not so long as the visible facts of the natural world continually show it forth:—for example, that “He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust”;<sup>1</sup> that there is also no discrimination among us in respect of the fruitful seasons which fill our hearts with food and gladness;<sup>2</sup> that His many differing laws are stable to one just the same, and as invariably, as to another; that His seas do bear upon their bosom the ships of the wicked just as well as those of the righteous; and that He giveth to all the very things now under consideration, namely, life and breath, as well as all things.<sup>3</sup> These facts prove His mercy to be over all His works, and that He has never ceased to love the creatures whom His own hands have made. And so, when we consider the relative degrees of merit among men, and yet, that all alike are deserving of Death, the fact that the existence of all, nevertheless, should be perpetuated, with common gifts showered indiscriminately upon all, evinces also that His mercy for all endureth without cessation, and without

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 5: 45.

<sup>2</sup> Acts 14: 17.

<sup>3</sup> Acts 17: 25.

respect of persons. And not only this; but when we further consider, that along with these common gifts of love there is exhibited at the same time a common judgment upon all in accordance with their deeds, there is demonstrated in addition a common purpose in behalf of all, which the unchangeable Creator keeps ever in view for the advancement and exaltation of His creatures. In contemplating, therefore, all this irrespective dealing, manifesting Him to be absolutely without respect of persons, we have the strongest assurance of His consistent character, and of the same irrespective dealing in all things. We may fairly conclude, in particular, that that new birth which the reason recognises as the necessity of every fallen creature has become equally the property of all; or that there must be a *universal* Redemption from Death and Justification unto Life. Assuredly, an irrespective God will not act graciously for one sinner, and not for another. If He redeems one from Death, He will redeem all from Death. If He justifies one unto Life, He will justify all unto Life. If one is born of Water and the Spirit, then will all be born of Water and the Spirit. Hence it was that St. Paul told the pagan Greeks, that the LORD was "not far from each one of us"; expressly adding, "For in Him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also His offspring."<sup>1</sup> And so too to the Galatians the apostle said: "When the fulness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under law, that He might redeem those who were under law (that is, all men), that we might receive the said sonship. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into

<sup>1</sup> Acts 17: 27, 28.



our hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant (under the penalty of the law of Death), but a son; and if a son, then an heir through GOD.”<sup>1</sup>

§17. GOD JUSTIFIES ALL MEN UNTO LIFE.—It is the great thought, that all men have been not only redeemed from Death, but also justified unto Life, through being regenerated by the great Giver of Life, and made His very children, which so constantly animated the zeal of St. Paul as the special apostle to all nations; and it is the same great thought which must permeate our own hearts and minds, before we shall ever be able to attain unto a sympathetic appreciation of the all-comprehending idea which runs through the many loving statements of the great apostle’s epistles, or to follow with accuracy the grand chain of reasoning in behalf of all men which is pursued in some of those epistles,—notably, the ones to the Romans, the Galatians, and the Ephesians. It is to be regretted how few of the deep thinkers among Christians, from the ancient Augustine and the logical Calvin to the many followers of each, seem to have been able to catch, in particular, the universal and loving spirit of the Epistle to the Romans. Many a babe in Christ has gathered comfort and hope from its loving and merciful assurances, where to the wise and prudent the meaning has appeared mysterious, gloomy, and terrible. And doubtless of my own readers the greater number will fail to realise that the very line of thought which I have been herein pursuing is in great part that of the noble epistle. Let me in very brief form—although

<sup>1</sup> Gal. 4: 4-7—lit. “the sonship,” “the (said)” referring to 3: 26 etc. declaring us “sons of God.”

I have done it elsewhere, and more than once,<sup>1</sup>—outline the apostle's argument therein. I would call special attention to the universality upon which the argument is based, and to its corresponding universal conclusions;—how, forasmuch as all alike had sinned, the Jews just the same as the Gentiles, therefore the merciful, irrespective GOD foreordained the recovery of all alike; and to that end recalled them to Life, justified them in His sight, and glorified them by adopting them all to become His children.

§ 18. PAUL'S MESSAGE—JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.—St. Paul significantly begins by declaring his divine mission to be, to preach the good news of his faith among all nations, and, among others, to the Romans. His argument opens, however, with the statement, quoted from Habakkuk, that that man only who is righteous has a faith which entitles him to live.<sup>2</sup> Just as St. James tells us that a perfect faith, such as was that of our LORD Jesus Christ, the only LORD of glory, and which his Christian readers did not have, would produce perfect works, making its possessor just or righteous,<sup>3</sup> so St. Paul declares, that it is the just or righteous man who shall live by faith. In other words, if a man's faith is perfect, so that he will do no sin, then he will not incur sin's mortal penalty, and shall therefore live. The manner of the opening shows a consciousness on the part of the apostle that his oral teaching of the gospel had been wrested to the destruction of souls. He knew that the same thing would happen also in the case of his epistles; just as we are told by St. Peter

<sup>1</sup> In *The Purpose of the Æons* for example.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. 1: 17. Hab. 2: 4.

<sup>3</sup> Jas. 2 ch.

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that such wresting did really occur;<sup>1</sup> and, it may be added, just as there is the same wresting to this very day. St. Paul is very careful, in consequence, to let men know that they cannot be justified unto Life by any faith which does not perfectly keep the holy law of GOD.<sup>2</sup> In the same way he says also to the Galatians: "For as many<sup>3</sup> as are of the works of the law (that is, as many as do not justify themselves by doing all the works of the law, or who are not perfect keepers of the law) are under a curse (*i. e.*, that of Death): for it is written: Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law, to

<sup>1</sup> 2 Pet. 3: 16.

<sup>2</sup> In the LXX. (the Greek version of the O. T. made about 274 years before Christ), Hab. 2:4 is thus given: "If he should draw back, my soul has no satisfaction in him: but the just man shall live by *my* faith." If this be the true idea of the passage, the prophet is referring to the fall of man, and his recovery through the perfect Righteousness or "Faith" of Christ, the only just or righteous man. Note, in the verses going before, with what lofty emphasis the prophecy is introduced, and how marked is the assurance that it will be fulfilled in its season. In Heb. 10: 38, Codex "A," besides other eminent ancient authorities, and Rom. 1: 17 of Codex "C," etc., have also, "But the just man shall live by my Faith." To see that this is the great idea of St. Paul in looking to "the Faith of Christ" alone for our justification, compare Gal. 3:8-14, where in verse 8 we find God to be the Justifier by Faith; and in verses 11, 12, that no man can be his own justifier; and this very quotation is given as the reason, inasmuch as his faith has not kept the law, and it required for him to live to have a faith that kept the works of the law, and made him a "just man." Hence in verses 10, 13, 14, we are told that so far from being justified man was cursed, and that Christ has redeemed him from that curse; the nations receiving the promised blessing of eternal Life through His (Christ's) Faith. The passage is quoted literally at the end of this section.

<sup>3</sup> We shall several times have occasion to notice how in the scriptures, and especially in St. Paul's writings, "many" is a common synonym for "all." This is important, and should be remembered.



do them. And that no man is justified in law in the sight of God is evident: for, The just shall live by faith; and the law is not of faith (that is, the keeping of God's perfect moral law is not done of our faith): but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: that upon the nations<sup>1</sup> might come the blessing of Abraham in Christ Jesus; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through His Faith."<sup>2</sup>

§ 19. PAUL AND THE IRRESPECTIVE CHARACTER OF DIVINE JUSTICE.—But to return to the Epistle of the Romans. From the preliminary statement that in order to live by his own faith a man must be just

<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, Gentiles and Jews alike.

<sup>2</sup> Gal. 3:10-14. Literally, "through the Faith." The article, however, according to familiar Greek usage, "so ably illustrated by the learned Bp. Middleton, . . . is neither more nor less than the *demonstrative* or *relative* pronoun." It here refers back to the Faith of Christ mentioned in 2:16, 20. For the apostle, having expressly declared that our imperfect faith could not justify, because it had not kept the law, looks for a Faith which could. That Faith he invariably declares to be "the Faith of Jesus Christ." Without warrant the versions drop the article from the passage altogether, and thus obscure St. Paul's meaning; although they have no difficulty in repeatedly translating the article as a pronoun, when it does not militate against the theological opinions of the translators;—so great is the unconscious influence of one's doctrines in such a matter. We might also translate the article "that," or "the said," or "the above-mentioned," etc.; but it is more neatly rendered "His." "In fact, as the article involves in all cases a reference, it is plain that it may oftentimes limit the sense of a passage, and preclude all interpretations but one." (Bp. Charles James Blomfield, *The Greek Article, History of Greek Literature, Encyclopædia Metropolitana*, pp. 351, 352. The bishop's remarks of course are general, or without special reference to this passage.) The whole context of Gal. 3:14 shows what is the one limitation of the article therein.

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or righteous, the apostle immediately proceeds to charge that no man is just or righteous. And this he does first in the case of the Gentiles; charging them with doing all manner of horrible things, although they had had fully revealed to them, in the unmistakable facts of the natural world, that the wrath of God was against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, thus leaving them without excuse. Accordingly, the apostle affirms that the Gentiles had had due evidence of the penalty which was the wages of sin; both, for that matter, of the First Death, and also of the Second. But to use his own words, they knew "the decree of God, that they which do such things are worthy of Death."<sup>1</sup> And he emphasises it as a truth known also to his readers: "And we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against them that do such things."<sup>2</sup> Having thus shown the Gentiles to be by the divine law under the sentence of Death, the apostle's next step is to call distinct attention to the irrelative character of the divine justice; expressly declaring that Jew and Gentile will have a common judgment; for, he says, "there is no respect of persons with God."<sup>3</sup> With this most appropriate preface he turns in the second place to the circumcised Jews, who were regarding themselves, because, forsooth, of a sacrament, as being exempted from the common judgment. He pleads with the Jews that, inasmuch as they too were sinners, just like the Gentiles, their very circumcision, which engaged them by express covenant to keep the whole law of God, had, because of its violation, put them on the same footing with the uncircumcised, and was no longer protecting them from the great penalty of

<sup>1</sup> Rom. 1:18-32.

Rom. 2:2.

<sup>3</sup> Rom. 2:3-13.

GOD'S violated law; and that therefore the judgment of the irrelative God would be the same upon them as upon the Gentiles. For, he declares, "not the hearers of law are just before God, but the doers of law shall be justified." And his conclusion therefore is, that all classes of men are alike (by nature) under the mortal penalty of sin; as it is written, not one being righteous, no, not one. Thus, he says, every mouth is stopped, and all the world becomes guilty before GOD.<sup>1</sup> In other words, there is not one just man to live by his faith; and the *necessity* for all alike to have a Redeemer and Justifier becomes clear.

§ 20. THE WORLD LOST, REDEMPTION ONLY THROUGH CHRIST.—Let me put the apostle's argument thus far in the form of a syllogism. And first in respect of the common judgment of Death; that is to say: "Whoever breaks GOD'S law is under sentence of Death. All men have broken that law. Therefore, all men alike are under sentence of Death." And next as to the impossibility of self-justification unto Life; that is to say: "The just man shall live by his faith. But no man is just. Therefore, no man shall live by his faith." It will be seen that the true basis upon which St. Paul's reasoning rests is that all men are sinners, or the universality of sin; thus making no man to be a favourite of the irrelative GOD above another, but all alike to be under the common sentence of Death, and needing to be redeemed therefrom, and justified unto Life. It is therefore with a whole world *in themselves* hopelessly lost, that the apostle points to the Messiah, the Son of GOD, as the common Redeemer and Justifier of Men. But let me here

<sup>1</sup> Rom. 2: 12-29; 3: 1-19.

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remind the reader that, while the human reason thus sees the obvious *necessity* of Redemption and Justification, and the equally obvious fact that they have been gained for all—for men, instead of suffering the immediate penalty of being wiped out of existence, have clearly had their lives prolonged<sup>1</sup>—the human reason can never discover for itself the *manner* by which the *necessity* has been supplied. What may be a satisfactory Redemption and Justification unto GOD, it is of course not for men to say. For the good news of the *manner how*, therefore, we must be altogether beholden to Revelation; and when thereby authoritatively told of the Lamb slain, in anticipation of GOD, from before the foundation of the world,<sup>2</sup> we must gratefully take the Revelation just as it was made. As believers in the Bible, we recognise in its lofty statements that holy truth which keeps ever in view the honour and glory of GOD, as well as the highest good of man; and we are filled with admiration at its superhuman consistency in these respects, and because it gives us also a more reasonable explanation of the facts of mundane existence than man has ever been able to think out for himself. That it should do all this, and show at the same time how ignorant on the natural plane were in general its several writers or compilers, and some of those of the Old Testament even gross, makes it the greater miracle. In every respect the evidence is complete, that in supernatural truth it was guided by the divine wisdom, and not at all by that of man.

<sup>1</sup> That Life should be prolonged for a moment implies immortality; for even that moment shows Redemption and Justification; for unless cleansed and justified, why should we live? and if cleansed and justified, why should we die?

<sup>2</sup> Rev. 13: 8. 1 Pet. 1: 19, 20. Eph. 1: 4. Rom. 16: 25, 26. 1 Cor. 2: 7. 2 Tim. 1: 9, 10. Col. 1: 26. Tit. 1: 2, 3, etc.

And accordingly, it is not for man to add to or subtract from, or in any wise alter or modify, its manifest inspiration in regard to that which it is beyond the mind of man to discover. If in things above us we attempt to be wiser than that which is revealed from God, and to know more of the necessity for atoning sacrifice than He Himself, our reason will inevitably find itself in the deep waters where it can make no progress, and where, as in the case of the dualist and the pantheist, it will be sure to be drowned.

§ 21. LIFE AND DEATH OF CHRIST SATISFIED GOD FOR LOST WORLD.—It was a privilege, highly valued by the apostle of all nations, after showing forth in the strong manner which has been described the universal necessity of Redemption and Justification as so entirely cognisable by our reason, to be able to proclaim unto all men the universal accomplishment thereof through the Life and Death and Resurrection from the dead of our LORD Jesus Christ; who, satisfactorily unto the Divine Nature, fulfilled in our place the Law of Righteousness by His perfect *Life* of Righteousness, and also by His *Death* suffered for us the full penalty of its violation; and who yet, being without sin, could not be holden of Death; who therefore burst its bonds for us all, and rose from the dead. And here, let us observe again, as we proceed with St. Paul's great argument, how logically true he is to the universal basis upon which he started; and how he makes nothing to be done by the irrelative GOD in behalf of one undeserving sinner, which is not done in behalf of all undeserving sinners. His next step, therefore, is to tell, in such plain terms as to make us wonder that his words should be so wrested as they have been, of the



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universal Redemption and Justification of all sinners alike; even expressly declaring that there can be no difference between believers and unbelievers in the matter, since all had sinned, and not one could presume to be so righteous, or to have such perfect faith, as to be entitled to live in the presence of GOD. Accordingly, following up what he had said, he thus continues (3: 20-30):

§ 22. PAUL'S ARGUMENT—SALVATION THROUGH BLOOD OF CHRIST.—“Because by works of law shall no flesh be justified in His sight (*i. e.* be so righteous before GOD as not to be condemned to perish): for through law (is) the knowledge of sin (and, but for Christ, would be of its penalty, Death).<sup>1</sup> But now the righteousness of GOD without (man's keeping) law<sup>2</sup> (*i. e.* without our righteousness) is manifested, being witnessed by (the perfect fulfilment by Christ of) the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of GOD by *Faith of Jesus Christ*<sup>3</sup> unto all (without exception),<sup>4</sup> and (also) upon all them that believe: for there is no difference (*i. e.* between believers and unbelievers in the matter of Justification unto Life): for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of GOD (or of the perfect righteousness which GOD requires to justify Life);<sup>5</sup> being justified (or made righteous so as to live) *freely by His Grace* through the Redemption (from Death) that is in Christ Jesus: whom GOD hath set forth (to be) a propitiation through

<sup>1</sup> Gen. 2: 17.

<sup>2</sup> Or, “apart from law.”

<sup>3</sup> Literally, “GOD's Righteousness through Jesus Christ's Faith,” or neither *our works* nor *faith*; neither having aught to do with our Justification. See also Rom. 5: 18, and 5: 1, 19, 9. Gal. 2: 16, 20; 3: 10-14, 21, 22. Eph. 2: 8-10; 3: 12. Phil. 3: 9. Col. 2: 12, etc.

<sup>4</sup> “For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the Faith of GOD without effect? GOD forbid.” Rom. 3: 3, 4. “For GOD hath concluded all as regards unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all.” Rom. 11: 32. See 1 Tim. 1: 13, 14.

<sup>5</sup> Matt. 5: 48.

the same Faith,<sup>1</sup> by His blood,<sup>2</sup> for a demonstration of His righteousness, through the remission of the sins that are past by the forbearance of God; to a demonstration (I say) of His righteousness at the present time; that He might be just and justifying, the (justifying) by Jesus' Faith.<sup>3</sup> (a) Where is the<sup>4</sup> boasting then? It is excluded. (Wholly so; the believer having no cause for boasting because of his inefficient work of faith over the unbeliever, nor the Jew

<sup>1</sup> Literally, "through the (*i. e., that or the same or His*) Faith," to wit, the Faith of Jesus Christ previously mentioned; the Greek article referring back to "*His Faith.*"

<sup>2</sup> His *Faith* obeyed the Law, and His *Blood* paid its penalty; and so, His Life and Death became our Righteousness before God.

<sup>3</sup> Literally, "that He might be just and justifying, *the* (*i. e., this*) by Jesus' Faith." The Greek article, as we have seen, has the force of a demonstrative or relative pronoun (*which* is by Jesus' Faith), and refers in an example like this to the word immediately preceding. God is inherently just, but He becomes justifying through Jesus' Faith or Righteousness as a Man. The words "the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (a. v.) or "the justifier of him which hath faith in Jesus" (r. v.), are not in the sacred text, but are the views of translators as to what St. Paul should have said, substituted in the place of what he did say! And yet there can be no plainer Greek; and the use of the Greek article as indicated is of common occurrence. See for a few pertinent examples the Greek of verse 24 just before; 1 Tim. 1: 14; 2 Tim. 1: 13; Gal. 2: 20. I cite these examples because of their pertinency to the subject. But in a general way the article so used is too common to require illustration. In fact, Rom. 3: 26 is a remarkable example to show how little the babe in Christ should depend upon the *authority* of "the wise and prudent." If he wants to get an unprejudiced translation of Rom. 3: 26, let him get it from a schoolboy, *who does not know how it has been translated in our Bibles*, and who has some knowledge of the use of the Greek article when placed after its subject, and *no theological views*. So far from St. Paul, contrary to the entire logic of his argument, affirming God in Jesus to be only the Justifier of the believer, he expressly states Him just below to be the Justifier of *the ungodly* (Rom. 4: 5), and in 3: 23, 24 of all men.

<sup>4</sup> The reference back of the article here is twofold; first, to the Jew, who, the apostle had said, rested in the law, and made his boast of being God's favourite, because of his circumcision; and

over the Gentile, because of his sacramental observances; but all being justified alike by the Faith of Jesus. And so all boasting by the justified is excluded). Through what manner of law? of Works? Nay: but through the law of Faith (or the law as perfectly kept by the Faith of Christ who thus manifested the Righteousness of GOD). We reckon therefore that a man is justified by Faith (the Faith which kept the law, or the Faith of Christ) without (the man himself doing) Works of law. (One of these, indeed, is his own work of faith. Since GOD is thus the impartial Justifier of all) is He (then) the GOD of the Jews only, and not also of the (unbelieving) Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: seeing it is one (and the same) GOD which shall justify the circumcision by (Christ's) Faith, and the uncircumcision (of the idolatrous, unbelieving Gentiles) through the (same) Faith."<sup>1</sup>

§ 23. ALL MEN ARE SINNERS AND REQUIRE COMMON JUSTIFICATION.—The making of any distinction between different classes of men in the matter of Justification unto Life where all were on the common level of sinners, and *already dead in the eye of the law*, and therefore *utterly incapable of faith or other works*, would have been intolerable logic, and both destructive of St. Paul's argument, and out of harmony with the irrelative nature of GOD. And as St. Paul was conscious that men were continually wresting his words

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secondly, to the believer, who, though a sinner, and equally with the unbeliever under the wrath of the law, thought himself only entitled to be justified; and would thus, the apostle had said, make "the Faith of GOD" of no effect to the unbeliever. (Rom. 3: 3.)

<sup>1</sup> The force of the Greek article is here very plain. In all these instances such words as "same," "said," etc., which are really essential in translating the proper force of the Greek article into English, should be left out of parentheses or brackets; but I insert either the parentheses or the brackets, that the reader may see what is the literal Greek form. Rom. 3: 20-30.



in order to create distinctions which would favour the Jews, or believers in Christ, or a predestined few, in the matter of justification, he was the more careful to destroy the fell spirit of exclusiveness. He had begun by stating that for a man to live by faith (and it is the same whether the man be a pagan, a Jew, or a Christian) he must be just or righteous; or that only a perfect faith which brought forth perfect works could be acceptable unto God. Charging all alike, therefore, to be sinners, he showed that all alike required a common justification, independently of themselves and of their own faith or righteousness, if they were to be permitted to escape being wiped out of existence, and live. He shows accordingly the folly of distinguishing between sinners that were Jews and sinners that were Greeks or barbarians; or between sinners that were believers and those that were unbelievers. "For what," he says, "if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the Faith of GOD (or, as he afterwards more explicitly says, 'the righteousness of GOD by Faith of Jesus Christ,' who is the common Justifier of all) without effect?"<sup>1</sup> And in the lengthy passage which I have quoted the apostle declares with similar emphasis the free justification by Grace of unbelievers and believers alike; for that all have sinned.<sup>2</sup> So, later

<sup>1</sup> Rom. 3: 3. In every passage where the revisers could, they have turned St. Paul's "the Faith of Christ" into words which denoted a believer's faith in Christ. But here that expedient would not answer. And so, they turned "faith" into "faithfulness!" So powerful is the grip of a false theology.

<sup>2</sup> The revisers, because of a few ancient authorities, strike out the troublesome words "and upon all." But they felt it a duty to put into their margin "Some ancient authorities add *and upon all*." The omission of these words in ancient authorities shows how early was the venturesome wresting of the apostle's words. That it is an omission seems clear; for the words are necessary to

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on, the apostle speaks of GOD as the Justifier, not of believers, but of the ungodly ;<sup>1</sup> and still later on, his words are, "By the righteousness of One (the free gift came) unto all men to justification of Life."<sup>2</sup> And at the close of his argument his universal meaning as to believers and unbelievers is again made unmistakably apparent, thus: "For GOD hath concluded all as regards unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all."<sup>3</sup>

§ 24. FAITH OR WORKS OF CHRIST GAVE LIFE TO ALL MEN.—To return, however, to the thread of the argument. In the fourth chapter of the epistle the inspired writer illustrates the gratuitous Redemption and Justification by the Faith of Christ which had saved the world from Death, and made it appear so perfectly righteous before GOD that it could live. He compares the wonderful result to a similar result on a limited scale brought about by the faith of Abraham. For because that faith had been *accounted* righteous in order that the *truly righteous* Faith of Christ might have its antecedent type, the old patriarch was represented to have rebegotten his son into Life, saving the latter from the otherwise inevitable decree of being

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give point to the "for there is no difference: for all have sinned," etc. Moreover, even where a mistake is honest, still, as against putting in or leaving out, addition or subtraction, the latter is always the more likely to be the mistake. And in cases of fraud, addition is not so likely as subtraction; something new being more noticeable than something left out.

<sup>1</sup> Rom. 4:5.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. 5:18. The r. v.'s translation is here also intolerable; for St. Paul's evident idea, literally translated, is "through one's (Adam's) transgression," on the one hand, and "through One's (Christ's) righteousness," on the other. See § 35. (a)

<sup>3</sup> Rom. 11:32.

wiped out of existence at the hands of Abraham, who is called by the apostle the typical father of all men. And to bring out still further the recondite significance of the scriptural parable as showing forth universal redemption and justification, the inspired writer points out that the typical faith of Abraham was represented as having been exhibited before he was circumcised; and that the intention of the allegory was to teach that he was to be regarded as the typical father not only of the Jews, but of the Gentiles as well. In the Epistle to the Galatians St. Paul uses the same illustration. After therein in like manner declaring that we could not be justified by our own works, but that we are now living "by the Faith of the Son of God," who loved us, and gave himself for us,<sup>1</sup> he says: "Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which are of (Christ's) Faith, the same are (like Abraham's son, saved by faith, and therefore in the parable are) children of Abraham (or children rebegotten into Life by a father's faith). And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the nations (*i. e.* all men) by (Christ's) Faith, preached the gospel beforehand unto Abraham (saying), In thee shall all the nations be blessed. So then these by (Christ's) Faith are blessed along with the faithful Abraham."<sup>2</sup> Thereupon the sacred writer declares the violators of the law to be under the curse of Death; expressly stating (as already quoted)<sup>3</sup> that no man can live by his own faith, because he is not righteous, and does not keep all the works of the law.<sup>4</sup> The apostle continues: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse

<sup>1</sup> Gal. 2: 16, 20.

<sup>3</sup> See § 18.

<sup>2</sup> Gal. 3: 6-9.

<sup>4</sup> Gal. 3: 10-12.

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of the law, being made a curse for us: . . . that upon the nations might come the blessing of Abraham in *Christ Jesus*; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through His Faith.<sup>1</sup> . . . Now to Abraham were the promises spoken, and to his Seed. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of One, And to thy Seed, which is Christ. . . . For if there had been a law given, which (men having kept) could have preserved alive, verily the (above-mentioned) righteousness (which is so essential to Life) would have been from (man himself keeping) law. (a) But the scripture hath concluded all things<sup>2</sup> under sin, that the promise *by Faith of Jesus Christ* might be given to them that believe. But before His Faith<sup>3</sup> came, we were kept<sup>4</sup> under law, being concluded<sup>5</sup> for His Faith<sup>6</sup> which should afterwards be revealed. So that the law hath been

<sup>1</sup> Literally, "through *the* (*i. e.*, above mentioned) Faith."

<sup>2</sup> *Concluded*;—shut up all—stopped the mouths of all. See Rom. 11: 32; 3: 19. *All things*. Was the neuter gender purposely used here, to indicate the nothingness of the dead before the law, or to extend the meaning to all creatures, or both?

<sup>3</sup> Lit. "*the* Faith." Men's faith had come from the beginning, and was so imperfect that it had resulted in Sin and Death. But Christ's Faith was "revealed" at a later day; and the result was Righteousness and Life. The importance of the article (omitted in our versions) is here most striking, and its significance unmistakable. It cannot refer to man's faith, but only to Christ's. Although we read of men having obtained a good report through faith, yet, it is said, they received not the promise (Heb. 11: 39). Why? Because the promise was by Faith of Jesus Christ (Gal. 3: 22, 23), and "*that* Faith" had not come. It was to be a revelation of the Righteousness of God. See also verse 14.

<sup>4</sup> *Kept*, while the law was threatening. Compare the same word in 1 Pet. 1: 5,—"*kept* (*i. e.*, *preserved* or *guarded* from Death) by the Power of God through (Christ's) Faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

<sup>5</sup> Shut up in guilty silence in respect of our own faith or other works, awaiting Christ's Faith.

<sup>6</sup> Lit. "*the* Faith."

our tutor for Christ (teaching us the need of a Redeemer and Justifier), that we might be justified by (Christ's) Faith. But His Faith<sup>1</sup> having come, we are no longer under a tutor (being no longer threatened with Final Death). For ye are all children of GOD through the (said)<sup>2</sup> 'Faith in Christ Jesus.'"<sup>3</sup> That is, the Faith or Works of Christ gave Life to all men, and made them children of GOD, after their own faith had resulted in Death.

§ 25. UNIVERSAL JUSTIFICATION AND INDIVIDUAL SANCTIFICATION.—In all that has been said it will be seen that the apostle proclaims always for the due justification of men, not our righteousness or imperfect faith, but the Righteousness of the perfect GOD Himself as manifested in the Faith (the equivalent of the perfect Works) of Jesus Christ. And this will be found to be his meaning at all times; although he generally makes various grades of condensation in expression, until, at last, he reaches the ultimate one of simply "Faith" and "Works"; meaning by the former the Righteousness displayed in the Life of Jesus Christ, and by the latter both the Righteousness and Unrighteousness of men. (a) St. Paul is never so illogical as to make the very instrumentality which brought Death upon men to be the means of restoring the non-existent to Life. But it is this justification of all men irrespectively, as the sole work of our LORD, which he invariably means by his "Justification unto Life"; or that in some way, which is beyond our powers of comprehension,

<sup>1</sup> Lit. "the Faith."

<sup>2</sup> The article is in the Greek, but does not appear in our versions, the translators not having perceived its referring force.

<sup>3</sup> Gal. 3: 13-26.



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a sinful race, which otherwise would have been a blot upon the universe of God, has been perpetuated in existence, cleansed by anticipation of God from before the foundation of the world in the blood of Jesus Christ. The sacred writer does not mean in the slightest degree that our existing *sinfulness* has been taken away; or that because of what Christ has done, if only we will believe therein, we are now ready for heaven. In this respect, if sins are to be remitted, they must be sins of the past,<sup>1</sup> or sins which have been repented of and forsaken. The most cursory reader of St. Paul's epistles ought to see, that upon the Foundation of a renewed Life and the indwelling Spirit, the laying of which Foundation could only be the work of the Son of God, or of that manifested Life which proceeds only from God, the inspired writer always insists that there must be a Superstructure of perfect, actual Holiness and Righteousness erected by the works of each individual man.<sup>2</sup> And so he draws a distinction between universal justification and individual sanctification. And always in the latter part of his epistles, whenever he has been speaking specially of universal justification, he enlarges at considerable length upon the necessity and profitableness of good works. (b)

§ 26. GOD'S JUSTICE SHOWN BY DEEDS.—In plain words, the apostle never casts a slur upon the merits of Christ, by representing them as sending *sinner*s, or the unperfected, to heaven. Indeed, he is particularly careful to show, that not even by their restoration to Life does Christ in any sense become "a minister of sin."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Rom. 3:25.   <sup>2</sup> Pet. 1:9.

<sup>2</sup> Or that we must make our calling and election sure (2 Pet. 1:10).

<sup>3</sup> Gal. 2:17.

Has the reader ever duly considered the fact, already mentioned, that the Saviour of sinners from Death forthwith becomes the Judge of their lives,—even the great Judge of all the earth? And has the truth come home to us, that it is only possible by being saved from Death to have a judgment which shall be according to the deeds of each individual, or a judgment which shall more strictly conform to the character of a GOD of irrelative justice? For had the actual judgment of all been the everlasting oblivion of a common Death, there could have been no graded justice according to the differing merits or demerits of individuals, and it would be in fact to the very worst that GOD would be most partial; since they would receive no more punishment than the best. Thus in all strictness, in the justification of St. Paul, GOD is even shown to keep Himself just by justifying. In His unfathomable wisdom He devises the method by which sinners shall not be suffered to compromise His own eternal justice, even while He exhibits towards them His eternal love and mercy. On the other hand, more even than by the common Death of sinners, would that eternal, irrelative justice have been compromised, if, by any ignoring the differing merits and demerits of individuals, universal justification, perpetuating the lives of all alike, had also meant universal, actual sanctification. And, of course, the compromising would be intensified, if the compulsory sanctification were of a part only, and not of all. In the matter of sanctification, therefore, in no other way could the equal, irrelative justice of God be displayed, than by a judgment which shall be always according to deeds. If we duly realise this great truth, we shall discard at once and for ever



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all thought of the compulsory conversion and perfection of sinners, whether in the case of ourselves or others, and whether in this life or at its close, or during any subsequent life.<sup>1</sup>

§ 27. SANCTIFICATION AND THE UNPARDONABLE SIN.—And we shall also begin to have some idea of the true nature, as before shown, of the Unpardonable Sin, or the sin against the Holy Ghost, who is the Eternal Sanctifier. Whatever a free Justification may do for all sinners, it is very clear that it has reached its limits when we come to their Sanctification; and that at this point all *compulsory* means of Grace have an end. The unsanctified heart, which, of course, and *in us all*, is in opposition to the special work and office of the Great Sanctifier, and is accordingly the one special Sin against the Holy Ghost, can never be pardoned—neither in this life, nor in that to come. It has been already mentioned how irrevocable are the gifts of God, and, among others, that great gift of sovereignty of will with which we have been endowed; and how the irrespective, non-coercive judgment of us all according to our respective deeds is both showing forth the inviolability of our individual sovereignty, which may not be compelled to righteousness, and also the consistent carrying out by Almighty God of the exalted purpose in behalf of each and every one for which that wonderful sovereignty was given. When Nature, therefore, keeps daily exhibiting before our eyes both the wilful sinfulness of men, and the non-coercive justice of Almighty God in respect thereof,

<sup>1</sup> Well, therefore, did St. Paul challenge criticism when he asks, "Do we then make law of none effect through the said Faith? God forbid: nay, we establish law." (Rom. 3:31.)

she constantly and fully confirms the assertions of inspiration, that the gifts and calling of GOD are alike without repentance, or change of mind, or that the mercy of the LORD endureth forever, and that Sinfulness is altogether unpardonable. On the one hand, however sinful we may become, or however little our Sinfulness may be, we may be sure accordingly, that that Sinfulness, much or little, cannot be compulsorily wiped out, and must be judged with uncompromising justice by the Eternal Judge. It may neither be ignored nor pardoned. To the last we shall be judged according to our deeds. In other words, as GOD cannot pardon, but one remedy is left; and it is for us to use it or not as we please; namely, to get rid of our Sinfulness ourselves, through the non-compelling aid of the Eternal Sanctifier, or of that very Holy Spirit against whom by our unsanctified condition we are daily sinning, and provoking to unpardoning wrath.

§ 28. SALVATION FROM SINFULNESS OBTAINED BY INDIVIDUAL NOT GIVEN BY GOD.—It thus appears, that where GOD's compulsory Grace comes to its end, man's Work begins. Man could not save himself from Death; because as a sinner he was already dead in law, and the execution of the sentence of Death as a fact had to be averted by other means. But so soon as that great deliverance was accomplished for him, and the new Life had been born, and had become the meet temple of the indwelling Spirit, the child of GOD was at once made able to work for himself. If before his Redemption from Death and Justification unto Life he was utterly helpless, he is now made all-powerful; because he has the power of GOD always ready to help him, according as he chooses to avail himself thereof.

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For the tender Father is so solicitous for the high exaltation of the creature in all his sovereign capacity, that He gives him the glory of all the Works within his limited power. Nay, we are expressly told, let us remember, that if there had been a law by the keeping of which the creature could have gained the continuance of even Life, verily he would have been suffered to be righteous by the keeping of law, and would thus have had the glory also of saving himself from Death.<sup>1</sup> But while this salvation of the sinner was necessarily a gift of Grace, and had had to be solely wrought out by the Redeemer and Justifier of all men, without any Works on the part of those that are redeemed and justified, whether for themselves or one another, it is otherwise in respect of the Salvation from Sinfulness. Unto those that are now able to work for themselves the loving Father insists upon giving the glory of so doing; while upon those who will not work at all, or who work in varying degree, what else was there for the irrelative Father to do, but on the one hand to use persuasive measures, or those calculated to influence the reason and the heart, and on the other to mete out His stimulating, but non-compelling judgments according to the several deserts of those whom His love would not allow to be destroyed? And thus, instead of pardoning Sinfulness, the unchangeable God who has irrevocably conferred upon each creature a sovereignty of will, with all consistency persistently demands that it is for the sovereign creature himself to make his calling and election sure,<sup>2</sup> or to work out his own salvation with fear and trembling<sup>3</sup> from that which cannot be pardoned. The least coercion of the sinner would neither be for his glory, nor that

<sup>1</sup> Gal. 3: 21.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Pet. 1: 10.

<sup>3</sup> Phil. 2: 12.

of God. To the extent of the coercion, the creature would have his godlike nature destroyed, and be made a machine; while the great God would not only be manifested as regardless of merit, and as putting the evil upon the higher level of the good, but would exhibit Himself to His creatures as finding pleasure in praising Himself, and in self-worship through machines of His own construction. If at any time a man is to be coercively converted or perfected, the question at once arises, Why was not the inconsistent, partial, degrading method arbitrarily resorted to from the beginning, and the intervening sufferings and sins of the tardily coerced individual spared? Why resort at one time to coercion, and previously thereto, by withholding the coercion, prolong and add to his misery and disgrace? And why all the while should false hopes be deceitfully held out by a God of truth to those unfavoured ones who are never to be in any way converted or perfected? For the glory of God do let us be reasonable. But if, in defiance of reason, it be our ignoble part, who are whimsical and saturated with favouritism and Pharisaic egotism, to be representing the irrelative, unchangeable Father of all in such ungodlike manner, then, verily, in so doing, we but follow our degraded nature,<sup>1</sup> as might be expected of us. The Bible, however, is a book of inspiration; and the greatest proof thereof is, that it is delivered from the foolish thoughts of men. It nowhere represents the great God in any such way. If it did, we might well suspect its inspiration; just as these miserable interpretations have really caused so many to do.

§ 29. WORKS AND SUFFERINGS OF MEN SUCCEED THOSE OF CHRIST.—With what supernatural harmony,

<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, the nature in which we are children of the devil.

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however, the Eternal Sanctifier of the fallen creatures of GOD is always set forth in the scriptures; and first, and in particular, as a Guide, or as One who never resorts to compulsion; and also as a Comforter, that is, to those who are in fellowship with Him in His work; and yet to the world at large as a consuming fire!<sup>1</sup> And what exceeding care is taken to show that the consuming, however, means neither the destruction of the sinner himself, *nor of his will*, but is directed against his imperfections.<sup>2</sup> Hence from Death or final Destruction Jesus is represented as the Saviour of all indiscriminately, but in other respects only of those that believe;—that is, let us remember, of those who become righteous.<sup>3</sup> If in the preliminary Salvation the Faith or Righteousness of Jesus is the all-sufficient substitute for ours, our faith or righteousness becomes at once all-essential the moment that that salvation has been gained.<sup>4</sup> And if by His Death He paid the penalty due from men, by that very deed, in thus bringing them into a prolonged existence, He made possible also the penalties to be inflicted upon the imperfect to secure their perfection; and left it for us to “fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ.”<sup>5</sup> And so, in the place of the First Death, from which we were saved by the sufferings of the common Redeemer, there comes a Second Death, from which we must be saved by our own.<sup>6</sup> Henceforth, therefore, to the Works

<sup>1</sup> John 14: 15-28. Heb. 12: 25-29. Ex. 23: 20, 21. Deut. 9: 7. Ps. 50, etc.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. 3: 12-17. Jude 23. Amos 4: 11, 12. Ezek. 3: 11, 27. Rev. 22: 11, 12. John 5: 24, 30, 40. 2 Pet. 2: 12, 13 (r. v.): 3: 9, etc.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Tim. 4: 10. Rev. 21: 27; 22: 14, 15, etc.

<sup>4</sup> John 3: 18, 36. 1 John 3: 7, 8, 14, 16, 23, etc. <sup>5</sup> Col. 1: 24.

<sup>6</sup> 1 Pet. 4: 1-5, 12-19. Rev. 2: 11; 21: 7, 8, etc.



and Sufferings of Christ must succeed the Works and Sufferings of men; until all things shall be subdued, and GOD shall be all in all.<sup>1</sup> The wages of Sin was Death; but it was possible to have the wages paid, and the *sins of the past* remitted,<sup>2</sup> in a manner satisfactory to GOD, and conformably to His holy, unchanging, irrelative nature, without the least interference with the sovereignty of the creature, but rather to the necessary preservation thereof. But Sinfulness is essentially a thing of *the present*.<sup>3</sup> It cannot be coercively done away with, and the free-will remain intact. And accordingly Sinfulness becomes the one Unpardonable Sin. The tares must be permitted to exist with the wheat; the "old man" with the "new"; and "the good fight of faith" by man must follow the good fight of "the Faith of Christ." After the great Sacrifice of the Cross had coercively effected universal Redemption and Justification, the body of Sacrifice is forthwith removed to heaven; that *in its place* One who is not a Sacrifice for Sin, and does no compulsory work, may come to godlike men.<sup>4</sup> For now that Jesus has ascended,

"there remaineth no more Sacrifice for Sins, but a certain fearful reception<sup>5</sup> of Judgment, and a fierceness of fire which shall devour (or, which comes to devour) the adversaries. When one hath set at nought Moses' law, he *dies* without mercy. . . . Of how much sorer punishment (than Death), suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy,

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. 15: 26-28. Eph. 1: 9, 10. Phil. 3: 21, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. 3: 25. 2 Pet. 1: 9.

<sup>3</sup> Requiring for its wages the Second Death of judgment according to deeds in the present, and so long as it exists.

<sup>4</sup> John 16: 7-15.

<sup>5</sup> The true idea of the Greek word—not "looking for," or "expectation."

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who hath trodden under foot the Son of GOD, and hath counted the blood of the covenant common, wherewith he was sanctified, and hath done despite unto (or, *outraged*) the spirit of the Grace?"<sup>1</sup> That is, hath outraged the purpose of the Salvation from Death given to him by an act of Grace,—even taking advantage of his renewed Life as one that was "delivered to do all these abominations."<sup>2</sup>

§ 30. THE DAY OF GRACE FOLLOWED BY THE DAY OF WORKS.—Thus while men are confusedly talking about their priestly sacrifices for the taking away of sin, in the supernatural harmony of the Bible the day of such sacrifices has entirely passed away;<sup>3</sup> and for the Sinfulness which visibly remains in us all no substituted sacrifice is taught as being of any avail. It is not that the Son of GOD, our Preserver, has ever left the earth. Rather, He tells us Himself, that He is

<sup>1</sup> Heb. 10: 26-29. The versions translate "the Spirit of grace"; omitting the article before "grace." Even in what are called "abstract nouns," however, the article, when used, defines or particularises. (*Anthon's Greek Grammar*, Rule XXXI.) A literal translation seems to me to convey best the idea of the sacred writer, who is evidently referring to the Grace shown us in the work of the Son of God, and is not speaking *indefinitely* of grace in general. He means "*that* Grace," not grace in the abstract.

<sup>2</sup> Jer. 7: 10.

<sup>3</sup> The Greek word for a priest who offers sacrifices is never applied in the N. T. to a "minister" under the Christian dispensation; for Christ's sacrifice was of common and equal efficacy to all alike, and no one has any superior rights or prerogatives therein or in respect thereof over another. That such exactness should be the case throughout the N. T. is another one of those marvellous consistencies—so different from what men would have made the N. T. to say—showing that its inspiration becomes more and more apparent the more it is studied. It is all the people who are Christ's royal priesthood in the N. T.; while He only is the great High Priest who has once for all offered the atoning sacrifice for sins. See Heb. 7: 24-28; 9: 7-28; 10: 1-23. See also Rev. 1: 6; 5: 10; 20: 6. 1 Pet. 2: 5, 9.



with us always unto the end of the æon.<sup>1</sup> But the Jesus of Sacrifice has ascended to Heaven; and He has ascended there, because His work of Sacrifice on earth is finished. "Though we have known Christ as flesh, yet now we know Him so no more."<sup>2</sup> Let us be duly grateful for the great work which His Sacrifice has accomplished, and fondly keep it in our memories; but let us duly realise that it is a work which can in no wise be repeated, nor needs to be repeated.<sup>3</sup> He that has once drunk of the Water of Life has no need to drink again.<sup>4</sup> He lives for ever; and no repeated drinking can make him live any longer. And so the day of Grace has fully attained its purpose, and is now appropriately followed by the day of Works. And accordingly the Divine Personality who has now come to us in the place of the great Sacrifice, the which Sacrifice was purposely removed to enable Him to come, instead of granting us pardon, as did the Sacrifice, or paying for us our debts, keeps us unremittingly in the prison-house of Judgment, until we ourselves shall have paid the uttermost farthing.<sup>5</sup> Nay, more; for it is the Saviour Himself, the Preserver of our Life, who now becomes our Judge; and is very jealous that we shall not be allowed to defile with impunity His pure and holy work.

§31. UNPARDONABLE SIN IN THE HEART.—How wonderful it is, that from every point of view the Bible should without a variation repeat to us this solemn lesson; for it is a lesson which is so utterly uncongenial to the hopes and wishes and ordinary

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 28: 20. Or, "unto the end of the (this) life."

<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. 5: 16.

<sup>3</sup> Heb. 10: 12-23, etc.

<sup>4</sup> John 4: 13, 14; 6: 35, 58.

<sup>5</sup> Matt. 5: 26; 18: 34, 35.

views of men, that even Christians go searching for the unpardonable sin anywhere but in their own hearts. And yet, at the very time that we were warned of it by the Master, He expressly compared it to a *corrupt tree* which kept producing corrupt fruit, and had to become a good tree, before it would produce the good fruit. And He further explained, that it was *the evil heart* which could only bring forth evil things, and must needs be reformed, before it would bring forth the good. And then He adds, showing how extreme was the unpardonableness of the evil heart, that if it brought forth but an idle word, an account thereof would have to be rendered "in a day of judgment."<sup>1</sup> Consistently with all this, the Bible, in its opening allegory, declares how Adam, although, on sinning, doomed to immediate death, had been preserved in Life; while in the place of the Death, there had come the judgment of toilsome labour by the sweat of the brow, and the accompanying thorns and thistles; the flaming sword of the unpardoning Spirit turning every way to keep the way of that Tree of Life which is in Paradise

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 12: 33-36. In the original the phrase "*the* day of judgment" occurs but once in the entire N. T., to wit, in 1 John 4: 17, wherein in express terms it refers to judgment "in this world." The idea of this latter passage, as compared with other scripture, would seem to be, that while "the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom," and an imperfect man is therefore wise in cherishing a wholesome fear of the judgments of the God of irrelative justice upon all imperfection or Sinfulness, yet as the man grows in love, and in the assurance of the love of God in Christ, he will grow more and more bold in his day of judgment, until, very rightly, perfect love, as no other should, will cast out all fear. Alas for the wisdom of those who, before their love is perfected, have the audacity to be fearless of the judgments of God; for according to our condition, so are we in respect of judgment "in this world." In all other places, save 1 John 4: 17, the phrase in the original is "in a day of judgment."

above,<sup>1</sup> into which may in nowise enter anything unclean, or that worketh abomination and falsehood.<sup>2</sup> So in Exodus, after the deliverance of the people from Death through the typical blood of the passover,<sup>3</sup> the people were caused at once to begin their long journey of *personal* toil to the promised land; and unto them the holy commandments of God were given, and it was said: "Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Take ye heed of Him, and hearken unto His voice; provoke Him not: for *He will not pardon* your transgressions; for My Name is in Him."<sup>4</sup>

§ 32. MAN ALONE RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS SANCTIFICATION.—Thus then in the Sanctification of men the solemn, final responsibility rests always with the individual; and the choice is ever his own to say, whether the kingdom of heaven shall be at hand in its wrath or in its glory;—that is to say, whether he shall see his great Judge (in the only way in which, while imperfect, he shall ever see Him) constantly coming *in the clouds* of heaven, and, so seeing, shall mourn;<sup>5</sup> or whether, becoming righteous, he shall be no longer banished from the glory of the LORD's visible presence into outer darkness and æonic destruction.<sup>6</sup> At all

<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, heaven; or not the paradise into which our LORD and the soul of the penitent thief went on the day of the crucifixion.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. 21: 27.

<sup>3</sup> Which had been put in the form of a cross upon the lintel and side-posts of their doors.

<sup>4</sup> Ex. 23: 20, 21.

<sup>5</sup> Matt. 24: 30. Rev. 1: 7. Heb. 12: 14. 1 John 3: 2.

<sup>6</sup> 2 Th. 1: 4-10.

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events, whether he recognise it or not, the Bible in a double sense is proclaiming the kingdom of heaven to be at hand; and therewith also the facts of Nature agree; and the one, like the other, is sounding forth an incessant call to repentance. In brief, in spite of sins innumerable, men continue to have their existence prolonged, and their wills preserved, and are held severely responsible according to their deeds. For, on the one hand, in respect of Death, the teaching of the Master is, that "all manner of sin" is His heavy burden. And yet, on the other, He tells us plainly, that nothing done against the Holy Ghost can be forgiven.<sup>1</sup> And if this be so, is not Sinfulness always opposing itself to the Holy Ghost? And do we not see what insuperable reasons there are why God should never pardon Sinfulness? Let me put prominently before the reader two of those which I have given, which are founded upon the emphatic statements of the Bible, and are corroborated by the facts of the natural world; thus: First, irrespective justice may not disregard the differing degrees of merit among individuals, nor elevate the evil to a perfect equality with the good. For, according to strict justice, men should always be rewarded according to their deeds; and the holy blood of Jesus ought neither here nor hereafter—"neither in this life nor in that which is to come"—to be made to minister to any sort of injustice, or to the procrastination of that which is good, and the

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 12: 31, 32. A literal translation would be: "Wherefore I say unto you, All sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the Spirit's blasphemy (*i. e.*, sinfulness) shall not be forgiven unto men: and whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this life ( $\alpha\omicron\nu$ ), nor in that to come." See § 124 (b), for notes, and context.

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prolonged gratification with audacious impunity of a sinful heart. And next, "the *gifts* and *calling* of God are without change of mind." That is to say, after making man a god, giving him a free-will sovereignty all his own, the Creator will not revoke that godlike sovereignty, nor swerve at all from the exalted purpose of the *gift*. He will neither destroy the man nor his will. Nor will He take back the high *calling* which He has given him in Christ Jesus. He will not degrade him into a machine, nor accept from him aught but free-will service. For should GOD become His own worshipper? Nay, do we not regard self-worship as most degrading even to man? For these reasons, then, and because He so declares, He will never pardon Sinfulness; and the visible proof of the fact is daily before our eyes. How, indeed, would the holy Sacrifice of Jesus have been defiled, if it had really been abused to the service of sin, whether in the case of the most godlike or the most devil-like among us, by the compulsory taking away of Sinfulness! Enough that thereby we all have been saved from the wiping out of existence which was our common due, without the compromise of either the justice or the irrespective nature of God, or the exercise of compulsion upon the will of man, and to the conservation of all that is glorious in both. Accordingly, it is well, that, notwithstanding our restored Life, it should be written, as one of the last, most emphatic utterances from Heaven in declaration of the unchangeable decree of God: "The time is at hand. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is



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with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." <sup>1</sup>

§ 33. BIBLICAL TESTIMONY TO THE INVIOABILITY OF FREE-WILL.—This exceptional emphasis at the end of the Bible, as to the inviolability of the free-will of man, reminds us of the similar strong emphasis of Moses at the beginning. Take, for example, out of a lengthy passage, this, in substance twice repeated: "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." <sup>2</sup> And yet these are but a few examples out of the many, all through the Bible, which tell us of the unpardonable sin, or that, if we continue un-sanctified, the omnipotent God will never coerce the unwilling soul. We hear accordingly the solemn cry of Jesus, at the very time that He announces the recovery of men from Death, "I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just." <sup>3</sup> And yet the announcement, notwithstanding its terrors, like all the announcements of Jesus, is a gospel unto men. For, just as their continual chastisement shows forth the unceasing love and care of God, and His persistent purpose to advance them, and

<sup>1</sup> Rev. 22: 11, 12.

<sup>2</sup> Deut. 30: 19. See the whole passage (11-30).

<sup>3</sup> John 5: 30. Jesus adds to this declaration that He will be *just although justifying*, "because I seek not mine own will, but the will of Him that hath sent me." This would seem to indicate how continually His human nature had felt the force of the temptation to deliver men from future Sins and Sufferings; and how persistently He resisted the temptation. What force this lends to the words of Satan when he showed Jesus all the world, and said, "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." (Matt. 4: 8, 9.)

that He will on no account destroy, so to be assured that neither in this life nor in that to come will He pardon our Sinfulness, is a message of good tidings which declares to us, that His efforts in the future life for our recovery and high exaltation will be continued as in this; and that though we may go on descending to unimaginable depths in the bitterness of the struggle, and our retrieval may be terrible, and terribly prolonged, yet at no time will the mercy of God give up the struggle, or His unpardoning judgments end in final, everlasting destruction. His justice, indeed, will be æonic, or extend from life to life, and be correlated with our Sinfulness; but His mercy will endure forever. The uncompromising struggle is a hopeful assurance that Jesus will finally, in fulfilment of His promise, draw all men unto Him,<sup>1</sup> and that in respect of everything which the Father hath given Him, He would lose nothing thereof;<sup>2</sup>—nothing, therefore, of its godlike sovereignty, but would raise it up in the last day.<sup>3</sup> As surely as He was crucified, and all men did suffer the penalty of death in Him, so surely should they die no more; because the penalty of the law was thereby fully executed, and death could have no more dominion over them.<sup>4</sup> And as surely as He was raised again, and all men were raised in Him,<sup>5</sup>—“justified unto

<sup>1</sup> John 12: 32.

<sup>2</sup> So in the Greek.

<sup>3</sup> John 6: 39, 40, 44, 54. The expression “in the last day” would seem to be equivalent to “at the last”; that is, “in the last day” of the particular individual’s long day of judgment, or at the end of the protracted struggle. See Acts 2: 17. Heb. 1: 2. 1 Pet. 1: 5, 20. 1 John 2: 18. 2 Pet. 3: 3. Jude 18. 2 Tim. 3: 1. Jas. 5: 3. Gen. 49: 1, 19. Is. 2: 2. Jer. 23: 20. Mic. 4: 1. John 11: 24–26; 12: 48. 1 Cor. 15: 26, 52, etc.

<sup>4</sup> Gal. 2: 19, 20. Rom. 7: 1–6; 6: 6–11.

<sup>5</sup> Col. 3: 1; 2: 12, 13 (refers to the baptism of blood). Eph. 2: 5, 6, 13.



Life,"—so surely was it the promise of a higher resurrection, the purpose to effect which the good GOD will never surrender.<sup>1</sup>

§ 34. PAUL'S ARGUMENT CONTINUED—JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.—And this brings us to the glorious continuation of St. Paul's argument in the Epistle to the Romans. In beginning, starting with the universality of sin, he had shown with that as his basis, that no man was entitled to favouritism from the impartial GOD; for example, the Jew no more than the Greek, or other Gentile; and therefore, that the irrespective GOD would not redeem or justify one sinner, and not another. He had proclaimed accordingly that all alike were redeemed from Death and justified unto Life. But now that the apostle has this higher basis of a common, universal redemption and justification to plant his foot upon, instead of the lower one of simply a universality in sin, he mounts still higher in his argument. Surely, he reasons, GOD did not redeem and justify all men, and at such a cost, to appoint any of them unto wrath.<sup>2</sup> Surely, His purpose was, that all should be saved, and should come unto the knowledge of the Truth;<sup>3</sup> or, as our Saviour puts it, should be guided into all truth;<sup>4</sup> that is, be brought to perfection; and that the purpose would be carried out in due time.<sup>5</sup> For if, the apostle argues, GOD would not at first redeem and justify one sinner and not another, how can He cease to be impartial, now that all are

<sup>1</sup> Rom. 4: 25; 6: 5, 8, 22, 23. 1 Th. 5: 9-11. 1 Tim. 2: 3-8. Tit. 1: 2; 2: 11-14; 3: 5-7. Alas, as to the higher resurrection, Hymenæus and Philetus have their successors, and many of them, to this very day! (2 Tim. 2: 11-21.)

<sup>2</sup> 1 Th. 5: 9-11. Rom. 8: 29, 30.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Tim. 2: 4-6.

<sup>4</sup> John 16: 13.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Tim. 2: 6.

redeemed and justified? If His love would not suffer Him to give up sinners under sentence of Death, and His purpose was to save while they were thus tainting His universe, shall that love or purpose cease, now that they have been cleansed in the blood of His own dear Son, and are living in His Life? And if, moreover, they have been thus raised up from their ruined condition through the Death of their Redeemer and Justifier, surely, the apostle further argues, what greater hopes of raising should be theirs, now that He is *alive again, and at the right hand of God*.<sup>1</sup> On the universal basis from which the apostle reasons, it would be clearly illogical to make his conclusions in any respect partial. In fact, he himself is particularly careful in them to make no distinction between unbelievers and those whom men call believers, but who, like the others, are in a state of Sinfulness. In another epistle he even declares, and with entire consistency too, that in his own case he had obtained mercy because he had acted ignorantly, or with sincerity, *in unbelief*.<sup>2</sup> And to St. Peter he had said in substance, that because their personal faith had been of no avail, and they could not be justified by works, “but by the Faith of Jesus Christ,” therefore they had believed in Jesus Christ, that they “might be justified by the Faith of Christ, and not by works of law: for (that) by works of law (of which works of course their personal faith was one) shall no flesh be justified.”<sup>3</sup>

§ 35. PAUL'S ARGUMENT ON BASIS OF UNIVERSAL REDEMPTION AND JUSTIFICATION.—But let me give, in part, the apostle's argument from the higher basis

<sup>1</sup> Or, armed with the right hand of Almighty Power.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Tim. 1: 13.

<sup>3</sup> Gal. 2: 16.

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of universal redemption and justification in his own words. In order to enforce upon us the gratuitous character of these great gifts of GOD, and how they had been procured for us in our helpless condition, the sacred writer says: "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For . . . GOD commendeth His love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." And upon this higher elevation of justification, so far above the condition of unjustified sinners, it is that his revelation goes on to proclaim the still higher purpose of GOD in behalf of all thus justified. He continues:

"Much more, then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the (above-mentioned)<sup>1</sup> wrath (at first producing Death, and now tribulations) through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to GOD through the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled (or no longer enemies), we shall be saved by His life: (which certainly should make Him more powerful than did His death): and not only so, but also (we shall be) rejoicing in GOD through our LORD Jesus Christ, through whom now (*i. e.* already) we have received the reconciliation (just mentioned,<sup>2</sup> or the first step in our upward progress). . . . For if by the offence of the one Death reigned by the one; much more they that (*i. e.* all men without exception who) receive abundance of Grace and of the Gift of Righteousness (thus imputed unto all for justification of life) shall reign in Life by the One, Jesus Christ. Therefore as by the offence of one (judgment came) upon all men to condemnation (of Death); even so by the Righteousness of One (the free gift came) unto all men to Justification of Life. (a) For as by the one man's disobedience the many

<sup>1</sup> The force of the article.

<sup>2</sup> *I. e.*, "the said reconciliation," the article again referring back.

(*i. e.* all) were made sinners, even so by the obedience of the One shall the many (*i. e.* the same all) be made righteous (*i. e.* justified).<sup>1</sup> Moreover the law entered that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, Grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto Death, even so might Grace reign through Righteousness (*i. e.* of GOD)<sup>2</sup> unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our LORD.”<sup>3</sup>

§ 36. PAUL'S ARGUMENT ON BASIS OF THINGS ACCOMPLISHED BY CHRIST.—For brevity's sake I pass over the repetitions in the sixth and seventh chapters,<sup>4</sup> and the apostle's care therein to show that the purpose of GOD in redemption and justification can only have its fruition through our own efforts to

<sup>1</sup> The reader should bear in mind always, that “justified,” and “made just,” or “made righteous,” are identical expressions.

<sup>2</sup> And, *possibly*, the apostle may mean also, through the to-be-acquired personal righteousness of man. I say, *possibly*; because the apostle is now talking of the Foundation as laid by Christ, and has no need as yet, logically speaking, to be taking also into consideration the Superstructure of man's building, however requisite that may be. Still he is ever anxious that men may not forget the importance of their own works for their proper purpose; and his language therefore may be intended to be a reminder of man's righteousness, even while speaking of God's.

<sup>3</sup> Rom. 5 ch. “Reconciled” by Christ's Death is the First Salvation; to be “saved by His Life” is the Second; and “rejoicing,” etc., is the Third.

<sup>4</sup> It is interesting, but confusing to some readers, to note how in chapter vi., St. Paul as usual with him, represents us as dead in Christ, and as having risen in Him to a new life over which the law has no power; but rather, having once executed its sentence, cannot kill us again: whereas, in the first part of chapter vii. it is the law itself which dies, and which had been married to us as our first husband. And by the death of the law we were freed from our marital bond, and so married Another, even Christ. It will be seen that, however diversified the illustrating figure, its purpose is the same; or to show that we are no longer under the law of Sin and Death, but under the law of the Spirit of Life, or of Grace, in Christ Jesus.

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walk in newness of life. In the eighth chapter he renews the argument as based upon the things accomplished by Christ.<sup>1</sup> At the beginning he reminds us, however, again, as follows: "There is therefore now no condemnation (of Sin working final Death) to them which are in Christ Jesus.<sup>2</sup> For the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of Sin and Death." The reader who is accustomed to a different line of thought must be cautioned against taking such expressions as these, of which St. Paul is so fond, in a partial sense. We must keep in mind that the apostle has been reasoning from a universal basis, and has in consequence reached

<sup>1</sup> And yet seeming again, all the time, to be keeping in view the necessity of man's works also;—in fact, so writing that his language seems to be a continual reminder thereof; so that men, in general, lose the thread of his argument; while, on the other hand, they do not realise, as the sacred writer wished, the necessity of works. This obscurity, it will be well for us to remember, is not accidental on the part of the revealing Spirit, however much it may be the fault of the writer. Its purpose, often spoken of in the Bible, is to develop humility, care, vigilance, industry, the sense of personal responsibility, reliance upon God, and never upon man, etc., in the individual reader, and generally to form his heavenly character, whether his interpretations be right or wrong;—the which, although important, are of inferior consequence. And the same obscurity carries with it a corresponding judgment upon those of opposite traits and habits, who do not recognise it as their unavoidable duty to give to God's own revelations their best *personal* attention, and who prefer to listen only to the interpretations of their human leaders; and who thereupon almost invariably plume themselves, whether truly or falsely, upon their superior knowledge! And this, although they dare to turn the back upon what the Spirit Himself is saying to them!

<sup>2</sup> Some high, ancient manuscript authorities add (in part or in whole, "who exist (literally, walk about) not as flesh, but as spirit." That is, who are no longer mortal before the law, but have through Christ the spirit of immortal life. The words, whether admissible here or not, occur in verse 4.



a universal conclusion, the universality of which he has himself asserted over and over again. His logical idea may be stated more plainly thus: "There is therefore now, because of Sin, no judgment by the law of final Death to men, who are all now saved therefrom in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of Life in Him, superseding the old law, hath made all men free, and me among them, from the law of Sin and Death." It is in like manner that we must interpret what follows; and the universality of the apostle's intention will occasionally be shown by himself. Certainly, when he says above "hath made me free," he does not mean at all himself only; and since, from any point of view, we must make the "me" to include others, it is clearly more logical and natural to make it include all for whom Christ died, to which "all" the sacred writer had expressly asserted the free gift of Justification unto Life to have come.

§ 37. THE FLESH AND THE SPIRIT.—Carrying out his idea, then, he thus proceeds:

"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the (weakness of man in the) flesh, God, sending His own Son in likeness of sin's flesh,<sup>1</sup> and on account of sin, condemned the sin in the flesh:<sup>2</sup> that the righteousness

<sup>1</sup> I give it literally to get the full effect of the reference thereto following—"the (said) sin in the (said) flesh."

<sup>2</sup> The reference of the articles may either be, without alteration of the sense, to flesh in general of men, or to that Flesh which the Son of God assumed, and which was "in likeness of sin's flesh." For the apostle is evidently regarding men as freed from the execution of the mortal penalty of sin, because of its full execution upon the Son of God *in flesh* as a Substitute for all. In 6: 6-11 we read: "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the *body* of Sin (sin's flesh) might be destroyed; that henceforth we should not *serve* Sin (that is, *be subject to its wages of Death*). For

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of the law (*i. e.* all the holy requirements thereof) might be fulfilled in us who exist<sup>1</sup> not as flesh (sin's flesh), but as spirit (or through the law of the Spirit of Life). For they that are as flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are as spirit the things of the Spirit. For the mind of the flesh is Death; but the mind of the Spirit is Life and Peace."<sup>2</sup>

And here let me renew my caution to the reader. St. Paul is not talking about *some* men being carnally minded, and *others* spiritually minded, and of the

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he that is dead (crucified in Christ) is freed from Sin. (For being dead already, how can sin kill him?) Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him; knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; Death hath no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died unto Sin once: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto Sin (killed by it when crucified with Christ), but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our LORD" (*i. e.*, immortal). So Gal. 2: 19, 20: "For I through law (inflicting its mortal sentence upon me in the Person of my Substitute) have died in law, that I might live in God. I have been crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live: yet no more I (that is, in my old "sin's flesh," to become again subject unto Death), but Christ liveth in me: and the (life) which *I now live in flesh* I live by Faith, that of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

<sup>1</sup> A secondary meaning of the verb, the primary meaning being "to walk about." We now *exist*, and for ever, because Christ, as a Substitute for all, has lived the *life* required by the law over all, and died the *death* due from us all as sinners; and so the righteousness of the law in every respect is fulfilled *for all* through Christ; but it is so fulfilled for us, that, in the place of being wiped out of existence, the righteousness may in a new life be fulfilled *in* and *by* us in an actual personal perfection, according to the purpose of God—"fulfilled in us who (now) walk about not as flesh (that flesh having died in law in its execution upon Christ), but as spirit."

<sup>2</sup> St. Paul's "mind of the flesh" and his "old man," etc., are the same; and this flesh or old man, though dead in law, lives in fact, to fight to its own death with the immortal "spirit of Life" or "new man."



differing results to the respective classes; as our good old version has so long in respect of this passage mistakenly taught us;<sup>1</sup> thus making it all the more difficult to grasp the apostle's true meaning. The sacred writer is true to his subject; and his words follow in logical sequence upon what he had been saying immediately before. He had told us of the superseding of "the law of Sin and Death" by "the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus"; and how in consequence "sin's flesh" had fully received its proper sentence of Death; or that we are no more existing as "sin's flesh," to receive that sentence, but are now, as spirit, to live, through the Spirit of Life within us all. And so, he simply here repeats that the former condition of "sin's flesh," or, as he now more briefly says, of "flesh," had been one of Death, while our present condition of "spirit," that is, of being under "the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus," is one of Life and Peace;—peace, because of God's reconciliation with His redeemed. In other words, St. Paul deems that he has been using amplified expressions quite enough to be able now to resort to those which are more brief. And although, in respect of the second Death, the words "to be carnally minded is Death" are strictly true;—while "to be spiritually minded" removes us, according to the deed, from the withering blight of that Second Death, and so gives the spirit Life and Peace, or in the secondary, superstructural sense; yet any abrupt introduction of the subject of Judgment according to deeds would be entirely out of line with the apostle's present line of thought. For he is still speaking of the Redemption of all men without exception from Primary Final Death, and of their

<sup>1</sup> The r. v. corrects the mistranslation of the a. v. of Rom. 8: 6.

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Justification unto Life, and how these great facts are demonstrating the high purpose of GOD as to all.

§ 38. GOD'S INDWELLING SPIRIT IN THE FLESH.—Let us then keep fast hold of the apostle's line of thought. Continuing therein, he gives anew the reason why the condition of "sin's flesh," or of "the old man" as derived from Adam, now happily at an end in its mortal threatenings to men, should have been one of Death. He says: "Because the mind of the flesh (of that flesh) is enmity against GOD: for," the apostle adds,

"it is not subject to the law of GOD, neither indeed can it be (its wages being Death): and they that are in the flesh (that is, *the said* sin's flesh, supposing, contrary to what has been said, that there could be any still in *that* flesh) cannot please GOD. But ye (like the rest of redeemed and justified men) are not in flesh, but in spirit, if so be (as has been declared of all) that the Spirit of GOD dwelleth in you."

Of course, in a natural sense, all upon earth are in flesh, and, as St. Paul has strongly shown, are tainted with the sins thereof; not one being without sin. And this clearly manifests that he is using the term "flesh" in a different sense entirely, or in a sense in which we are no longer in flesh; just as he had stated. The flesh, of which he is now speaking, is never described by him as in any case a condition of the present. And therefore it is that he says, for example, in 7: 5, "For when we *were* in the flesh"; and in 8: 3 calls it "sin's flesh," upon which the final, Death-producing judgment of GOD *had gone forth*; thus making it a condition wholly of the past.<sup>1</sup> Clearly then the inspired

<sup>1</sup> That is, in law, and in respect of St. Paul's corresponding use of such expressions.

writer is not referring at all to our present Sinfulness, or to the carnal mind which is now troubling us, and bringing down upon us our heavy judgments according to our respective deeds; but, true to his line of thought, to that condition of Mortality from which all sinners alike have been recovered. His meaning is, If the Spirit of GOD, conferring Immortal Life, now dwelleth in men, ye, men, are no more in flesh, subject to the law of Sin, producing as its wages permanent Death.

§ 39. CHRIST'S SPIRIT QUICKENETH UNTO IMMORTALITY.—He proceeds: "And if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His"; that is, must be still unredeemed, and unjustified, or unregenerated into Life. In other words, we cannot begin with universality and end with denying to some what we allow to others. If all were sinners, all were redeemed; if all were redeemed, then, in the same irrespective way, all were justified, or re-begotten into Life; and if this last be true, then all must have in them the Spirit of Life, or the Spirit of Christ. And if this be not true, then were they not redeemed, and are not His. The apostle is pushing the universality of his declarations with characteristic vigour. He continues:

"And if Christ is in you, the body (that is, 'the flesh' above mentioned) is dead because of sin (crucifying the creatures with Christ); but the spirit is Life because of Righteousness (that is, that of the risen Re-Creator). And if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies through His Spirit that dwelleth in you."

In saying this, the apostle is not speaking of the

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resurrection of the dead in the present ordinary use of the phrase; nor, of course, of that "body" or "flesh" ("sin's flesh") which has received for ever its penalty of Death when it was crucified with Christ. On the contrary, the mind of the sacred writer is still upon the purchased immortality of all men, and of the consequent revivification of the present mortal body under a new condition altogether different from the old. That is to say, all men had died with Christ under the reign of "the law of Sin and Death," but they had risen again with Him under the reign of a new law, that "of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus"; and their present mortal bodies were therefore quickened or made alive by that Spirit under this new altered condition. The apostle had already told us all this at considerable length (6: 6-11, § 37, foot-note), and he speaks accordingly now with the greater brevity. And let us remember how he says it also, very concisely, in Gal. 2: 19, 20:

"For I through law (the law of Sin and Death) have died in law, that I might live in God. I have been crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet no more I (that is, not of myself, or of my own Works, for I then should die again; because I should again be in sin's flesh, or under 'the law of Sin and Death'), but Christ liveth in me: and that (Life) which *I now live in flesh* I live by Faith, that of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me."

§ 40. FAITH AND FLESH IN ROMANS.—With the same idea still in view, the apostle in Romans, with the impressiveness of a personal appeal, and as consequential upon what he had been saying, adds:

"Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live as flesh. (We do not owe our life, which we are now

living, to our own deeds of flesh, which flesh rather had to die for its sins. Not at all.) For if ye live as flesh (if your present life be depending upon the deeds of the flesh), ye would die: but if in spirit ye put to death the doings of the body, ye shall live.”<sup>1</sup>

St. Paul, of course, does not wish us to put to death the good deeds which we do in flesh. And yet it would seem to be these very deeds of which he particularly speaks. The good deeds cannot gain life; for Death followed immediately upon Sin; and the good and the evil deeds alike thereupon came in law to their end. The reasoning of the apostle requires all the deeds of the body, therefore, to be put to death, in order that only in the new Life begotten in us we may live. Because, in particular, of a misunderstanding of his teaching which is still prevalent, and which he would correct, we have seen how again and again he points out the inconsistency, when a man is so dead in law that he can have no works, of making him by “the work of faith”<sup>2</sup> to bring himself to life! The harmony of inspiration is too supernaturally true and exact to tolerate such nonsensical contradiction of doctrine; and St. Paul, just the same as St. James, would put the question, If a man “have not works, can faith save him?”<sup>3</sup> Take, for example, his own question, “For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the Faith of God without effect?”<sup>4</sup> Or the apostle’s point blank declaration that there is no difference between believers and others, because all have sinned, and come short of the glory (of the Righteousness) of God, and are justified freely, as a matter of pure Grace, through the redemption that

<sup>1</sup> Rom. 8: 12, 13.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Th. 1: 3.    <sup>2</sup> Th. 1: 11.

<sup>3</sup> Jas. 2: 14.

<sup>4</sup> Rom. 3: 3.

is in Christ Jesus.<sup>1</sup> Or the further statement, all in this one epistle, that "God hath concluded all as regards unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all."<sup>2</sup> And, to give one more example, personal to himself, and so entirely consistent with the others, how he says, that he himself had obtained special mercy, because his wrong-doing had been occasioned by ignorance when in unbelief.<sup>3</sup> If any one sees any difference between the teaching of St. Paul and St. James, it is because he has not properly understood St. Paul and his harmonious utterances against Salvation from Death other than by the perfect Faith of Christ, and the utter helplessness of human works, including faith, to effect that Salvation. And in so proclaiming, he is every whit as strong as St. James. And, just as much as would St. Peter also, he would not have us, in respect of the acquisition of our new Life, think for one moment that we were other than as new-born babes.<sup>4</sup>

§ 41. THE WORK OF FAITH IN PHILIPPIANS.—In the Epistle to the Philippians (3:7-9), in order to make the more apparent what had been necessarily done for us by the Faith or Works of Christ, he first claims special excellency for his own faith and works from his very birth according to his light, and then adds:

"But what things were profit (or, *gain*) to me, these I counted loss for Christ: . . . for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may profit (or, *get gain*)<sup>5</sup> by Christ, and be found in

<sup>1</sup> Rom. 3: 22-24.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. 11: 32.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Tim. 1: 13.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Pet. 1: 3, 4, 18-21, 23; 2: 2.

<sup>5</sup> As translated in Jas. 4: 13. For Christ is a free Gift to men.



Him,<sup>1</sup> not having mine own righteousness, which is from (works of) law, but that which is through the Faith of Christ, the Righteousness of God by the said Faith.”<sup>2</sup>

And so in the Epistle to the Colossians, it is “the Faith of the operation (working) of God,”<sup>3</sup> that hath quickened us into Life. And again, in the Epistle to the Ephesians it is declared, that “we have boldness and access with confidence through the Faith of Him.”<sup>4</sup> And, to give one more example, in the same epistle we read:

“For by the said Grace have ye been saved through the

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We utterly spoil St. Paul’s idea when we translate “*win Christ*”; as though at the very time when the apostle would show the uselessness of works, he would represent us as *winning Christ by our works!* In translating *profit* and *profit by*, or *gain* and *get gain by*, it is after the manner of St. Paul, who also uses in the Greek a verb corresponding to the noun. See § 22(a).

<sup>1</sup> Note the repetitions. He neither *wins* nor *finds* Christ, but *profits by* and *is found* in Him. The disgraceful insignificance put upon St. Paul’s own faith and works to justify unto Life is not enough for him, and so by further repetitions he goes on to emphasise how free is the Gift of Christ to all. “For God so loved the world that He hath *given*,” etc. (Our LORD’s words in John 3: 16.)

<sup>2</sup> Lit. “*the Faith*,” *i. e.*, “*that Faith*,” or “*the said Faith*,” the article (omitted in our versions, as though its use by the apostle went for nothing) referring to “the Faith of Christ” mentioned just before. What a call it is to the exercise of individual responsibility, care, and diligence, in searching the scriptures, when thus the brightest and most learned scholars of the world, as well as the rulers of all the differing churches, have shown an utter failure to grasp the very first and fundamental feature of the gospel,—that we are justified by the Faith of Christ, as an act of free Grace to all men alike! Evidently, even in the beginning of the twentieth century, “the wise and prudent” are no more an *authoritative* guide for the “babes” than they were in the first.

<sup>3</sup> Col. 2: 12. The r. v. without a shadow of justification miserably perverts St. Paul’s Greek.

<sup>4</sup> Eph. 3: 12.

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(His) Faith;<sup>1</sup> and that (Salvation by Grace through the [His] Faith) not of yourselves (*i. e.*, neither the Salvation, nor the Grace, nor the Faith, is any work of ours):<sup>2</sup> it is the Gift of GOD: not of Works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God hath before prepared that we should walk in them.”<sup>3</sup>

Thus, like the other scriptures, St. Paul's writings also, so far from limiting Justification unto Life to a few believers, or to the baptised, in as express terms as it seems possible to use, denies such limitation; and claims instead, that, by the Righteousness of Christ only, “the free gift came unto all men to Justification of Life.”<sup>4</sup> And accordingly, like the other sacred writers, he too styles the acquisition of new Life by all alike as their “Regeneration”; making GOD through Christ to be the only Regenerator or Begetter of the new Life. Because, doubtless, of the ecclesiastical surroundings and prepossessions beclouding the judgment, men in general do not seem to realise, that the designation “Regeneration,” thus given by inspiration, puts the manner of obtaining the new Life on the same footing with the manner of obtaining natural

<sup>1</sup> Lit. “*the* Faith,” the article emphasising and thus briefly referring to the Work of Christ as previously mentioned. Apparently, however, because the apostle had not before expressly used the phrase “the Faith of Christ,” he takes care immediately to explain, that he is not referring to our faith, or to any salvation wrought thereby. Note this well.

<sup>2</sup> “And *that* not of yourselves.” *That* in the Greek is neuter, while *Grace* and *Faith* are feminine. Hence, *that* refers to the whole *idea* going before,—in fact, to all three words, or not merely to *Faith*, but to *Salvation* by *Grace* through *Faith*. See Phil. 1: 28.

<sup>3</sup> Eph. 2: 8-10.

<sup>4</sup> Rom. 5: 18.—“Being justified freely.” 3: 24.

life, or of "generation." That is to say, like as in the case of generation, so, by regeneration, the child is simply begotten and born, wholly without its consent, and without its doing anything whatever by will or deed. It had no works, faith, or will, of its own, in the matter. And being the finished act of the irrespective God, it was as freely done as was generation in the case of all alike; and no act of any creature, whether for himself (by his faith) or for another (by baptism), was required to give it efficiency. It is only possible after birth for the child to believe and be baptised. And if man is to be made the child of God, it is God alone that should be his Regenerator. If it be done by a man's own faith, then man becomes his own spiritual parent, and is his own child—not God's. And so, out of dead nothingness he would come into being by a *spontaneous*, self-originating regeneration, in spite of the fact that "from nothing nothing comes." And as for baptism, the Bible certainly teaches, as well as common sense, that the adult person baptised has not only existence already, but a previous *spiritual* existence, in order previously to believe and consent to be baptised. For that matter, the motions of the Spirit of God are daily making themselves apparent both in unbaptised persons and in unbelievers; and St. Paul accordingly, most consistently with his ideas of Justification by Faith, recognised in express terms the Athenian idolaters to be children of God.

§ 42. CHRIST AND UNIVERSAL IMMORTALITY.—This is his great idea all through that part of the chapter in Romans which we are now considering; and how consequential it is upon what he had said before is shown by the manner in which he begins the

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chapter.—“There is *therefore now* no condemnation” etc. Of the condemnation upon evil works according to deeds he is not now speaking. For in proclaiming the Foundation of gratuitous Life to man, it would clearly be foreign to his line of thought, and greatly tend to interrupt the same, and too, just as he is approaching the climax of his deductions, to be inculcating continually in the midst the vital necessity of good works. This, as a matter of subsequent and consequential consideration, he takes care to do in the twelfth chapter, and to the end of the epistle. Nay, it must be confessed, he has not hesitated to add to the difficulty of following his train of reasoning by remarks of that nature, incidentally interjected, in the sixth and seventh chapters. But in orderly course, it is no time to be rearing the Superstructure of a building, before the Foundation is completed. And in the eighth chapter St. Paul is still engaged in showing forth the wonderful Foundation of Life and Immortality which has been laid for all alike by Christ Jesus. And the very basis of his reasoning is, that we were all dead in law by reason of sin, with the legal power of doing works for our redemption and justification utterly gone. Moreover, the inspired writer is just on the point of telling us how, in fact, we have been exalted also into being made the children of GOD; and how it was all by a foreknown and predestined determination of GOD from before the foundation of the world! We can well see, therefore, that when he is describing these preliminary, glorious works of GOD for all, it is not the time to be mixing up therewith the subsequent works of men on their own individual behalf. Let us first know that there is under us all such a stable, everlasting, all-glorious Foundation; and then we may be persuaded

how all-essential it is for us severally to be building thereupon a Superstructure of our own, which shall be in like manner stable, everlasting, and all-glorious. Let us realise that each one of us has been endowed with an endless, deathless Life as a son of God, with all the individual, inviolable sovereignty of will pertaining to our exalted condition; in order also to realise that the day of compulsory Grace for sinners is at an end; and that now, instead of permitting us to sin that Grace may abound,<sup>1</sup> the Holy Father of us all will not tolerate in any one of His children, believer or unbeliever, baptised or unbaptised, a single spot, or wrinkle, or the slightest possible blemish.<sup>2</sup> Let the consciousness of our enduring filial relation to the all-holy God permeate our souls, and in its logical order we shall gain more and more a due appreciation of the fact that the Second Death of Judgment according to Deeds has surely succeeded to the Final Death of Destruction; and shall in consequence be continually penetrated with a sense of the necessity of making each Deed pure and holy. What an ever-present stimulant to high endeavour it would be,—one which under procrastinating ideas of the Judgment Day we do not have,—to realise that *eternal* or *æonic* judgment<sup>3</sup> cannot possibly be postponed, but exists to-day as much as it ever will; and that the fire of God's wrath is already prepared for the devil and his angels or children,<sup>4</sup> and will be proportioned in its intensity and fierceness to the demands of every occasion; and that the length of our "Day of Judgment" is in each case depending altogether upon ourselves. (a)

<sup>1</sup> Rom. 6: 1, 2.

<sup>3</sup> Heb. 6: 2.

<sup>2</sup> Eph. 5: 26, 27.

<sup>4</sup> Matt. 25: 41.



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§ 43. PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY AND DOCTRINAL TRUTH.—For wise reasons, which it does not belong to my present purpose to enter into, the Bible does not set forth the great principles of the doctrine of Christ in such clear, analysed, and regular form, as to be readily apprehended, and all possible mistakes and controversies avoided; and, most consistently, does not allow of their being set forth *authoritatively* outside its pages. It is sufficient here to say, that the divine course adopted secures to men their liberty of choice as to the truth of doctrine, and puts upon them a personal responsibility, that tends to awaken their manhood, and to make them careful, watchful, and diligent. St. Paul, even more than other sacred writers, has been hard to comprehend to this very day. In fact, the apostle was aware of his obscurity, and shows it in many ways. I can well understand therefore, during his long train of thought in Romans, how anxious he would be at times to keep his readers from inferring, from the universality of his conclusions in regard to what Grace had done for sinners, that if they sinned the more, the Grace would the more abound;—thus making their actions altogether indifferent and useless; and I can see how, to correct this mischievous misunderstanding (which even at this day makes an imperfect faith sufficient for all purposes, even while visibly it produces imperfect works), he would be led, first, to repetition in diversified ways; then to introduce at times strong injunctions to good works, just where he is showing their utter nothingness in redeeming from Death and acquiring Life; and, finally, to the use of ambiguous sentences which belong primarily to his great line of thought, but in which, nevertheless, those who should not follow him therein might at



all events find an imperative direction to holiness of life. While there was, and still is, an evident necessity for all this care, it has also added to the difficulty of getting at the apostle's primary idea in certain passages; and this difficulty is particularly apparent in some of those which we have considered.

§ 44. ALL MEN CHILDREN OF GOD.—But we have now reached the point where he enters upon the climax of his declarations. He would at last have us rise to an appreciation of the greatest fact of all that, with GOD Himself as the irrespective Redeemer, Justifier, and Regenerator of men, they have all without exception been made His children. Following up the previous declaration, above given, that the "flesh," or "body," with its deeds, is dead in law, and powerless as a source of Life, and that GOD is the true Begetter of our Life, he adds in proof, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of GOD, these are sons of GOD." (a) In other words, whoever has within him the inward movings of the Spirit of GOD leading him on to the good,—as is the case with us all,—that man carries within him the proof of a spirit which has come from GOD, and that, in spite of his sins, he has been by Him re-begotten into Life.<sup>1</sup> That is to say, all men have the experience of the truth that they are the sons of GOD in their own hearts and consciences. For is there a man upon earth who has never had a demonstration of the new Life within him? And from whence did the inward moving to the good proceed, if not from the sole Source of all good? Surely, if there be the least evidence of spiritual good in a man, however

<sup>1</sup> "We know that we have passed from Death into Life, because we love the brethren." 1 John 3: 14. See § 64.

degraded he may otherwise be, it must have been begotten in him of GOD; and if in all men there be the evidence of this spiritual life, then are all the children of GOD. Each man therefore, I repeat, and it is the idea of the apostle, carries within himself the testimony that he is a child of GOD. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of GOD, these are sons of GOD." Let no man accordingly who has within him a moving to the right be afraid of hopeless destruction, now that GOD has made him His immortal child. For if he is a son, then must he be like his Divine Parent, even an heir of GOD, or an inheritor of the Divine Nature. For such a man, or for all, Death is abolished, and Life and Immortality are brought to light, by the merciful, universal Regenerator. So indeed St. Paul elsewhere tells us; declaring also, that GOD "hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own Purpose and the Grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before æonic times."<sup>1</sup> Because therefore, ages before we were born, independently of our merits or demerits we have all been made children of the everlasting GOD, according to the Purpose of the æons, through the Faith of Christ,<sup>2</sup> the apostle in Romans goes on to say:

"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again

<sup>1</sup> 2 Tim. 1: 8-10. Literally "before æonic times";—one of the many instances where the word so often translated *everlasting* and *eternal* in the Bible proves its limited meaning normally. The article before "Grace" is not in the Greek, but in English its insertion makes a clearer, less awkward, and even less ambiguous translation. For I will venture that many a reader, notwithstanding the singular number of the verb in the phrase "which was given," makes the "which" to refer to "Purpose" as well as to "Grace," and imagines the "was" to be a grammatical error.

<sup>2</sup> Eph. 3: 11, 12.

to fear (*i. e.*, ye have not been subjected to the law again to dread its sentence of Death); but ye have received the spirit of adoption (or, better, *sonship*),<sup>1</sup> whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit (by the good within us) that we are children of GOD: and if children, then heirs; heirs of GOD, and joint heirs (*i. e.*, we are *together heirs*) of (not *with*) Christ (that is, we inherit Life and the Spirit from GOD through Christ); if so be that we (all men) suffer together, that we may be also glorified together."<sup>2</sup>

In other words, all men thus inherit Life and the Spirit, and are made the sons and heirs jointly of GOD through Christ, if so be, as the apostle had declared, that they all together had been crucified with Christ, and had thereby "suffered" Death before the law, that they might be also, all together, raised in Him to a new Life, wherein they are "together glorified" by becoming such sons and heirs.<sup>3</sup> We perceive, therefore, that just as St. Paul began his preaching to the Athenian idolaters by announcing to them that they were the sons of GOD, so he still preaches to us in his glorious epistle.

§ 45. GOD'S GLORY REVEALED IN HIS CHILDREN.— In this momentous declaration he reaches the climax of his revelations of what the Grace of GOD in Christ has freely done for man, and of its exalted purpose in behalf of us all. And we shall presently hear from the thankful apostle notes of holy joy on a higher and more prolonged strain than is elsewhere to be

<sup>1</sup> See Gal. 4: 5, 6, and § 45.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. 8: 14-17. See 1 John 3: 24; 4: 7, 12, 13.

<sup>3</sup> *I. e.*, the idea is, that all suffer Death together in Christ to become sons of GOD, not that they must suffer individually in differing measure to become perfect, however true also that undoubtedly is.

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found in his epistles. And yet, to think, that even the ecstatic notes of his glad, catholic heart, because of what glorious things GOD had already done, and still purposes to do for all His fallen creation in His eternal love and mercy, should be wrested by such logical minds as Augustine, and Calvin, and Luther too, and hosts of others, to the destruction, that is, according to their misunderstanding, of the greater number of souls, and to the disquieting of many an humble follower of Christ. How totally different from their destructive ideas was the spirit and intention of St. Paul! In fact, at this place in the epistle, he looks back at the glorious things of which he had been telling, and proceeds to show what comfort their redemption, justification, and being made sons of GOD, should be to the whole creation now in the pains of travail and of gradual evolution. And grouping together what GOD had thus done for His creatures, he rises into most gladsome words of ecstatic joy because thereof,—the very words which Augustine and the rest have so horribly perverted,—and declares anew in exultant strain the high, future, undeviating purpose in behalf of all which is by these things evinced. To give the apostle's words:

“ For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the *manifestation* of the sons of God (or, for the time when it shall be *shown forth* unmistakably that all creatures are verily the sons of GOD). For the creation hath been subjected to vanity, (bound fast in the bondage of changeful nature, with all its trials and troubles here and hereafter,)—not of its own will, but through (the power of) the One who hath subjected,—in hope; (or by no baleful predestination); because the creation

itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only (the whole), but even ourselves, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for sonship (*i. e.*, the fruition or manifestation [v. 19] of sonship,<sup>1</sup> to wit) the redemption of the body of us (or, 'the deliverance<sup>2</sup> of our body,' even the whole body of those having the firstfruits, from all evil).<sup>3</sup> For we have

<sup>1</sup> The word seems to require amplification or emphasis to make the passage intelligible. It literally means "making of a son"; and in *Hom. Ven.* 256, 283, the noun and verb of which the word is compounded, used together, denote natural generation. Strictly, the meaning, whether natural or by adoption, depends upon the context. Thus, in inscriptions, "— son of — by son-making" signifies a son "by adoption." In the preceding context of Rom. 8: 23, however, St. Paul has distinctly affirmed that we are already children of God, and that the spirit (whether of adoption or sonship) has already been received. How then can we be said to wait for that which we already have? Shall we confine his words to the world before the Cross? Hardly; for he is evidently speaking of present conditions—how we had been made heirs, and are now waiting for the inheritance. The rendering "sonship" may be made in every one of the five places in the N. T. in which the word is used; to wit: Rom. 8: 15, 23; 9: 4; Gal. 4: 5 (that we might receive the said sonship. See §124.); Eph. 1: 5 (predestined unto sonship). I prefer in Rom. 8: 23 "sonship," as better denoting the future realisation of the hope set before us, of which the apostle is speaking. Moreover, the new Life within us is said to be begotten of God, not adopted.

<sup>2</sup> As in the preceding note it was not the fact, but the realisation thereof, for which we are said to wait, so here it is not redemption in its ordinary sense which is spoken of, *i. e.*, from Death, but the redemption from the Second Death, or the deliverance from Sinfulness and Suffering, as becomes the condition of a perfect son of God. In Heb. 11: 35 the a. v. and r. v. translate the word "deliverance."

<sup>3</sup> Literally, "the redemption of the body of us." The apostle is not referring to the redemption already effected for all, nor to a resurrection of our natural bodies; but to the deliverance from



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been saved in that hope.<sup>1</sup> But hope that is seen is not hope; for what one seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for what we see not, then do we with patience wait.

“And likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity: for we know not how we should pray as we ought; but the Spirit itself interveneth in aid of our unspeakable groanings.<sup>2</sup> Yea, He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the desire of our<sup>3</sup> spirit; for, like a GOD, He interveneth in aid of holy things”;

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evil of the whole *body* of us, even of all creation now groaning and travailing in pain. There is the same use of the word in Eph. 1: 14 and 4: 30.

<sup>1</sup> Lit. “in *the* hope” (dative case in the Greek without a preposition). That is, we have been saved from Death in the anticipation of this further deliverance. The article refers back to the hope previously mentioned—*i. e.*, our subjection to the natural in hope. The possible bearing of this mysterious passage upon our own past history, now happily wiped from our memories, should not be overlooked; for it seems to regard man as the developed head of all visible life, and as having a community of interest therewith, or as “the firstfruits,” but still in a state of groaning and travailing, and not yet delivered. See Hos. 13: 13.

<sup>2</sup> To wit, those mentioned just before in verse 23. It is also the literal Greek.

<sup>3</sup> Lit. “the.” For those unacquainted with Greek I should emphasise the fact, of which the versions afford many instances, that the Greek, like several well-known modern languages, prefers the article where we would use the pronoun. Those who in this passage make GOD the Spirit to be spoken of as interceding with GOD the Father—the GOD of Love—the very One who sent the Spirit to be our Guide and Helper!—are consistent in their error in holding “the Spirit” here to be interceding with groaning! I can understand, indeed, why Jesus, in His *human nature* as our Atoner, should pray to and intercede for us with GOD, even to bitter groaning. But the act of the Holy Spirit, in taking up His abode with men severally, is not looked upon as so many incarnations, and is not revealed as such. Shall we then unnecessarily introduce the inharmonious idea here of GOD praying to GOD, and of His doing so with groaning? The normal senses of the Greek



not alone of saints indeed; since that would be of small comfort to sinful men; but in aid of us all, whom the apostle had proclaimed to have been justified,<sup>1</sup> and made sons of GOD, and were therefore now to be considered as "holy things"; no one being excluded from the intervention, any more than from GOD'S other irrespective benefits of rain, and light, and air. To us all, then, in encouragement of each one's personal effort, the apostle continues: "And we know that to them that love GOD all things work together for good,—to them that are called<sup>2</sup> according to the Purpose";—that is to say, the Purpose manifested in our Redemption, Justification, and being made sons of GOD.

§ 46. TRAVAIL BRINGS COMFORT TO GOD'S CHILDREN.—Interrupting for a moment the apostle's words, let us observe, in respect of this comforting encouragement by him given, that of all who groan and travail, it takes the form of comfort to those only who

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verb are, *to chance* or *light upon*, *fall in with*, *meet with*, etc.; and, joined here with a preposition signifying *over*, *above*, *in aid* or *behalf of*, etc., we have very naturally in this passage the idea of the intervention of the higher power in our behalf, when we know not how to pray as we ought, and, as it were, the heart is using inarticulate groans. In the versions, however, in the face of the literal Greek, and as though the Holy Spirit were a second incarnation of GOD repeated in each man, it is He who is proclaimed to give forth the groans. See, however, verse 23. Let the scholar carefully examine again the Greek of this whole passage, and rid himself of these preposterous ideas.

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.*, made righteous or holy, and accordingly *a holy thing*.

<sup>2</sup> The Purpose is universal, as will "be testified in due time" (1 Tim. 2: 6); but all for a while may not hear, or do not give heed to, the universal call. Those who do not will not receive the Spirit as a Comforter, but as a consuming fire. The Vulgate reads: "who according to the purpose are called, being made holy," or "being sanctified."

love God. So consistent is the Bible in its every detail; retaining an apparently unconscious harmony, where at some point or other amid the complexity of spiritual things, the hand of man would be sure to betray itself by contradiction. For although St. Paul is writing in gladsome mood of what has been done for all men, and is about to come to the climax of his exultation in respect of the high purpose of God in behalf of all, he does not forget that the *comfort* of a redeemed and justified and God-derived Life is only for the deserving; and that *as a Comforter* the world at large, or the old man within, cannot receive the Holy Spirit.<sup>1</sup> Just as of Judas Iscariot it was even said, that it had been good for that man if he had never been born. It may do for theologians and metaphysicians to argue that "Life is a good" even in an endless hell; but the Bible does not make it a good, even in a hell of temporary duration, for any who wilfully persist in their sins.<sup>2</sup> And how terrible may be the sufferings, not merely "of this present time," but of future æons or lives, to the persistently wicked, who can tell? For, certainly, the æonic judgment, or judgment from life to life, of the holy God will not permit of the least trifling with the holy gifts which have been purchased by the precious blood of His dear Son; and as our condition becomes more and more perverse, in like degree, we are assured, will the non-compelling judgments increase in intensity. And, of all others, who more require a

<sup>1</sup> John 14: 17. 1 Cor. 2: 14.

<sup>2</sup> Rather, the Bible calls the life of the wicked death, saying of them that they are dead while they live; and contrasts their life, as being death and cursing, with that of the good, as being not only life, but blessing. See Deut. 28: 66; 30: 15, 19. Prov. 18: 21. Matt. 8: 22; 26: 24. 1 Tim. 5: 6. 1 John 3: 14. Jude 12. Rev. 2: 11; 21: 8.

stern awakening than the indifferent,<sup>1</sup> the careless, and those that scoff? While they are in that condition, they do not even ask for comfort. For the perversely wicked, accordingly, there is little comfort to be extracted from the consciousness that they can never finally die; and even less from the declaration that GOD out of hope hath subjected them to a changeful condition, and will never give up the hope, any more than He will at any time surrender His eternal love and mercy. Rather, to them the meaning is inevitable judgment, continual chastisement; a vain calling to the mountains and rocks to fall on them, and hide them "from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb";<sup>2</sup> in short, no way of escape except by the one hated road of repentance, which daily grows before them longer, and more tedious, and irksome, and generally disagreeable. Indeed, in persistency, as well as severity, what a terrible meaning has the Wrath of GOD'S Love! for, unlike hate, that Love is eternal. Accordingly, the wrath of hate may have its day, and then it dies; but the Wrath of GOD'S Love can never cease until its purpose is wholly gained. And so, from the Wrath of the Lamb the *sinner*, whether he be what we call converted, or a believer, or not, can never be hidden. That is to say, *in respect of Sinfulness*, the Lamb will never suffer Himself to be defiled into becoming the hiding-place of the sinner. Only in respect of final Death is the Cross an effectual hiding place from the Wrath of GOD; or, on the one hand, only where, instead of contracting a stain, the justice and mercy of GOD are aided by the universal and eternal prolongation of the life of sinners, and, on the other, where also, instead of bringing degradation upon men

<sup>1</sup> Rev. 3: 16.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. 6: 16.

as a creation of GOD, the Cross, with its adjunct of the Spirit, preserves and exalts the godlike sovereignty which is their irrevocable gift. So much then for the apostle's comfort, and the limitation thereof to those that love GOD. It is for those that groan and travail, indeed, but only when at length they shall show forth the firstfruits of the Spirit, and shall learn to love GOD, and so not only recognise themselves as called and chosen, but exalted, pursuant to His universal, æonic Purpose.

§ 47. JUSTIFICATION MAKES MEN SONS OF GOD.— But in that Purpose, so irrevocably fixed in behalf of all His creatures on the part of the GOD of Love and Mercy, the good apostle finds not only comfort, but his heart is stirred to its depths with joy and gratitude, because of what GOD has done for all; and as he turns to review the things which, as an inspired writer, he had been revealing, his enthusiasm mounts apace, and becomes contagious. He remembers how GOD had chosen to redeem and justify all men in Christ before the foundation of the world; and to the holy St. Paul it was all the greater comfort and satisfaction, because the universal, everlasting redemption and justification had been effected in the hope of leading the redeemed and justified to become as holy and perfect in their own personal subjection to GOD, as they have been made by imputation in Christ. With gratitude therefore the sacred writer calls to mind, how GOD had predestinated them unto this holy sonship to Himself through Jesus Christ; and how, pursuant to this purpose, in due time Christ had died for the ungodly; and that the free gift had come unto all men to Justification of Life; and that men had been verily

made children of God. And so in joyous review he writes:

“For whom He foreknew, He also predestinated (to be) conformed to the image of His Son, that He (the Son) might be the firstborn among many brethren (or among all men; [many], as usual with the apostle, including all);<sup>1</sup> and whom He predestinated, them He also called: (for God not only calleth all men to repentance, but, moreover, His gifts and calling are without change of mind, or recall, as the apostle afterwards tells us):<sup>2</sup> and whom He called, them He also justified: (making no distinction, but justifying all that have sinned, ‘freely by His Grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus’):<sup>3</sup> and whom He justified, them He also glorified” (that is, to be made His children).

<sup>1</sup> After St. Paul’s usual manner, “whom” and the equivalent “many” mean “all.” See §44(a) and Rom. 4: 17, 18, “father of many nations.”—And Heb. 9: 28, “Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.”—And Heb. 2: 8-12: “Thou hast put all things in subjection under His feet. For in that He has put all things in subjection under Him, He has left nothing that is not put under Him. But now we see not yet all things subordinated to Him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels because of the suffering of Death, crowned with glory and honour; that He by the Grace of God should taste Death for *every man*. For it became Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing *many* sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are *all* of one; for which cause He is not ashamed to call them *brethren* (even *the many* sons of God, or *every man* for whom He tasted Death); saying, I will declare thy name unto *my brethren*.” And in like manner it is said soon after in verses 14, 15, “that through Death He might destroy him that hath the power of Death, that is, the devil; and deliver them *as many as* (or, *such as*) through fear of Death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” And “many,” we have seen, is not by any means the only limited expression by using which the apostle clearly means to designate all men. His writings are full of such expressions.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. 11: 29.

<sup>3</sup> Rom. 3: 24; 5: 18.



§ 48. GOD CALLS MEN ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE.—Corresponding with this celebrated passage St. Paul elsewhere writes, how GOD “hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own Purpose, and the Grace which was given us in Christ Jesus, before æonic times, . . . who hath abolished Death, and hath brought Life and Immortality to light through the gospel.”<sup>1</sup> Indeed, we are too apt to forget that, in the matter of predestination and calling, our LORD came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance;<sup>2</sup> and that it was the salvation of all sinners which He purposed by His Death; none of us being good (quotes the apostle emphatically), “no, not one.”<sup>3</sup> How strange that such minds as those of Augustine and Calvin did not see the plain, universal basis upon which St. Paul builds the declarations by them unhappily perverted! and too, when he takes so great care in express terms to show from time to time, that they are made of all men! Indeed, if any one of the declarations, no matter which, is of universal significance, the same significance necessarily attaches to every declaration; both because every one has a common, underlying basis, and because also every declaration is dependent upon and specially asserted in respect of the others, and is of the same creatures. Whatever, for example, is declared of those whom GOD foreknew, is also declared of those—neither more nor less—whom He predestinated, and called, and justified, and glorified. And if, for further example, “the free gift came unto all men to Justification of Life,” then, necessarily, according to the inspired writer’s mutually connected statements, are the same

<sup>1</sup> 2 Tim. 1: 9, 10. See also Eph. 1: 3-10.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. 9: 13.

<sup>3</sup> Rom. 3: 10.



“all men” foreknown, predestinated, called, and glorified. There is no possible evasion of this conclusion; and it makes no manner of difference at what particular link of the apostle’s chain we start to run it out. What is asserted of his “whom” in any one case, he makes to be asserted of the same “whom” in every other. But if we wonder that such minds as those of Augustine and Calvin should not have seen these things, let us remember the great lesson of our LORD, and also of the sacred writers in many places, that to promote the manhood of men, and to correct their slavish, sheeplike following of authority among themselves, and to preserve their personal independence of judgment, GOD doth hide from the wise and prudent what He reveals even unto babes.<sup>1</sup>

§ 49. THE INSEPARABLE BOND BETWEEN CHRIST AND US.—Nay, still more strange is it, that Augustine and Calvin should not have understood the universal intent of St. Paul’s declarations, in view of the fact that the apostle, immediately upon putting these declarations into a chain of common significance to all, once more expressly explains, that he is speaking of “us all.” For thus he continues (31, 32): “What shall we then say to these things? If GOD be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up *for us all*, how shall He not with Him also freely give us (that is, of course, ‘us all’) all things?” O what delight must have been in the holy apostle’s human, godlike heart as he uttered triumphantly this convincing and most encouraging question. In the same spirit of exultation he goes on (33, 34):

“Who shall lay anything to the charge of *GOD’s elect*?

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 11: 25.

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It is God that justifieth (here again making the elect the equivalent of the justified, which latter the sacred writer in express words had declared to be 'all men'). Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also (like the Spirit does for all the groaning and travailing creation) interveneth in our behalf,"

or for all for whom He, Christ, died and rose again.

The apostle is now at his highest pitch of exultation, rejoicing the more because of the *enduring* nature of what had been done by the love of God, through Christ and the Spirit, "for us all." He tells us, first, of the inseparable bond of love between Christ and us (35-37), and then adds (38, 39):

"For I am persuaded, (would that we all could be!) that neither death, (which is but the passage into another æon, and is not at all the unpardonable sin which it is made to be, being in fact, in general, involuntarily suffered), nor life (and how imperfect that is we all know), nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers (however bad, or subtle, or powerful,—nay, not Satan himself), nor things present (however vile), nor things to come (though they be the lowest depths of hell, and all the wickedness that brought us there), nor height (which, if not perfection, requires God's aiding providence to make it higher), nor depth (whatever our depravity and degradation), nor any other creature (whoever it be, or whatever it be, that shall lead us astray), shall be able to separate us (though such miserable sinners) from the Love of God, which is (not based upon any merit that is in us, but is) in Christ Jesus our LORD."

§ 50. SAME SALVATION FOR JEWS AND GENTILES.—All unaware, seemingly, of how men were to wrest his joyous words to the destruction of the great majority

of souls, the sacred writer proceeds in the 9th, 10th, and 11th chapters of his epistle to divest the Jews, if possible, of their narrow-hearted exclusiveness, by showing them, that if GOD were pleased to do these exalted things which had been told of for the Gentiles also, as well as for them, or for all men alike, He certainly had the right; for He surely was the Potter, and His too was the clay; and that if they were unwilling to put themselves on a par with the Gentiles before GOD, then nought remained, but that the Gentiles should in their turn become the chosen vessels of GOD to receive and hold forth to the world the glorious news of what St. Jude calls "the common salvation"; even as the Jews had previously been His chosen vessels to foretell thereof by suggestive types and symbols; the which, however, they had not themselves understood. And so it would be for the wise Potter, although to the unmaking of His previously favoured Church, to make of His lumps of clay vessels to honour or to dishonour, according to their respective fitness for the carrying out of His beneficent purpose in regard to all. For thus would He at the first bring in "the fulness of the Gentiles," and afterward also have all Israel saved; making "in due time" the whole lump unto honour. And it is therefore, after declaring these things in many ways, and at considerable length, and how unalterable is the Purpose of GOD in behalf of all men, whether Jews or Gentiles, that the apostle consistently finishes up the "Foundation" part of his epistle in these all-embracing words:

"For the Gifts and the Calling of GOD are without repentance (*i. e.* unchangeable).<sup>1</sup> For as ye (Gentiles) in

<sup>1</sup> Lit. "not to be repented of."

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times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their (the Jews') unbelief; even so have these (Jews) also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded them all (*i. e.* both Jews and Gentiles, or all men) as regards unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past tracing out! For who hath known the mind of the LORD? or who hath been His counsellor? or who hath first given to Him, that it should be recompensed unto him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen." (Rom. 11: 29-36.)

§ 51. THE SUPERSTRUCTURE—MEN'S WORK FOR THEMSELVES.—And now at length it is, or at the beginning of the 12th chapter, after having shown what the Foundation laid in Jesus Christ has done for all men, that the apostle proceeds to the Superstructure to be built thereupon, or to what men severally must do for themselves. To his logical mind the first thing in due order was the Faith or Works of Christ; and after that the faith or works of men. It was first the Grace of God; but now, with the indwelling Spirit to guide, and stimulate, and be, if necessary, "a consuming fire," it is what man himself shall do. It was first, therefore, the Sacrifice of the Body of Christ, and what was freely by it accomplished; but now that that all gratuitous *Sacrifice* is, with the Body of Christ, removed from earth, and therefore that "though we have known Christ as Flesh, yet now we know Him so no more,"<sup>1</sup> and now that the Spirit accordingly utterly refuses to pardon our sinful condition, nothing remains but for

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. 5: 16.

men to make sacrifices of their own bodies; not to Death, of course, for that normal debt of guilt was fully paid when the great Sacrifice was still here, and was duly offered; but in activity of Life, through all manner of good works. And so the apostle proceeds:

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by (or, *because of*) the mercies of GOD (of which he had told), to present your bodies a *living* sacrifice (or not an altar sacrifice), holy, acceptable unto GOD, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this life:<sup>1</sup> but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove how the will of GOD is that which is good, and acceptable, and perfect.”

That is to say, each man by his holy life of self-sacrifice can prove as to himself that GOD's will, purpose, and predestination are, verily, as good, acceptable, and perfect as the apostle of all nations has declared them to be in respect of all. For as GOD is the only Source of good, and, as St. James says, “every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning”; so any goodness in man evidences the unchangeable will, purpose, and predestination of GOD (from whom that goodness descends), that man should become perfect, and that he is called to better things.<sup>2</sup> But our present subject does not require that we should go with St. Paul into the minute details of moral duty which he now enforces upon his readers, as consequential upon the grand position in which the work of the Faith of Christ has placed them.

<sup>1</sup> As is the normal meaning of *aiōn* in Greek. It never means strictly “world.”

<sup>2</sup> Rom. 8: 14-17.

The purpose of this volume at present simply demands attention to the showing forth by the apostle, first, of the *necessity*, when men were dead by reason of their trespasses and sins, of *regeneration* of them all by the Divine Power, and of their consequent universal Redemption from Death and Justification unto Life; and that, secondly, in view of the Divine Nature of the Begetter of this new Life, all men have therefore been made for ever the sons of God, having been born of God through Christ and the Spirit, like producing like.

§ 52. AGREEMENT OF PAUL AND JAMES.—Leaving, therefore, St. Paul to enforce upon men, who have been made immortal, the imperative necessity of holiness of life, if they would not remain in this life and in all future life in the consuming fire which (the apostle in his next epistle tells them) is continually trying each man's works, it may be interesting to observe how exactly all that has been said by St. Paul tallies with the Epistle of St. James. Luther confessed that his doctrine of the individual justifying himself by his own faith did not agree with that epistle, and presumptuously denied in consequence its inspiration, calling it an epistle of straw! And his many followers who are believers in that inspiration are continually floundering under like difficulty; and often manifest their trouble by attempting some other preposterous method of getting around their difficulty. The truth is, they have not at all understood St. Paul; and they never suspect that with him, and not St. James, is the true cause of their perplexity; and this, notwithstanding the express warning in regard to the obscurity of St. Paul's epistles given us by St. Peter,<sup>1</sup> and in spite

<sup>1</sup> 2 Pet. 3: 16.



of St. Paul's own plain declarations that the Righteousness of God through the Faith of Jesus Christ is the true and only instrumentality for the justification of men;<sup>1</sup> and that thereby all men have been made sons of God.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Such, for example, as those in Rom. 3: 3, 22, 26 (see Greek); 5: 1, 6-21; 6: 23; 7: 4; 11: 32; 1 Cor. 3: 9-16; 6: 19, 20; 10: 1-6; 15: 22-28. 2 Cor. 5: 14-21; 13: 4-6. Gal. 1: 4-9; 2: 16, 20; 3: 10-14, 22-26 (see Greek); 5: 4 (spoken argumentatively as in 3: 21), 25. Eph. 1: 4-10. To revive the memory of St. Paul's consistency in the matter, let me repeat some of his statements from different epistles, the which have not been quoted as often as some other examples: Eph. 2: 8-10: "For by the said Grace have ye been saved through His faith (literally, 'through the Faith,' referring to God's 'Grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus' going immediately before); and that (salvation by Grace through His Faith) not of yourselves: it is the Gift of God: not of works (and therefore again, as faith is a work, not of any man's own faith), lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God hath before prepared that we should walk in them." 3: 11, 12: "According to the Purpose of the æons which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord; in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through the Faith of Him." Phil. 3: 7-9: "But what things were profit to me, these I counted loss for Christ; . . . for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may profit by Christ, and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is from law, but that which is through the Faith of Christ, the righteousness of God by His Faith." Literally, "by the (said) Faith." Col. 2: 12, 13: "Ye have been together raised through the Faith of the operation of God, who raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He together quickened in Him, having forgiven us all our trespasses." 1 Tim. 1: 13, 14: "I obtained mercy, because, being ignorant, I acted in unbelief. And the Grace of our Lord superabounded with Faith and Love, that, namely, in Christ Jesus." I. e., St. Paul's unbelief is opposed to Christ's Grace and Faith and Love. Cf. 2 Tim. 1: 13. And see, among other examples, Col. 3: 4. 1 Th. 5: 9, 10. 2 Th. 2: 16, 17. Tit. 1: 2; 2: 11; 3: 4-7. Heb. 12: 2, "Jesus the Beginner and Finisher of the Faith" (not *our* in this text).

<sup>2</sup> Rom. 8: 14-17. Gal. 4: 4-9. Eph. 1: 4-6. Tit. 3: 7.

§ 53. TEACHING OF JAMES.—Let us then compare very briefly what St. James says. For the inspired St. Paul himself gives us as a rule to discover and test what is spiritual truth, to compare spiritual things with spiritual things.<sup>1</sup> And in the first place, St. James also tells us of the universality of sin, and of Death as its normal penalty; how GOD did not tempt any man, but that every man had been enticed by his own lust, and that his sin had brought forth Death (1: 14, 15); that, indeed, a single sin was quite enough to bring upon him his condemnation, just the same as if he were to break the whole moral law (2: 8-11). And the same apostle declares, we remember, GOD to be the unchangeable Giver of all good. And then clearly and distinctly he tells us how GOD *of His own will*, or not at all of ours, when we were thus dead in sin, had begotten us, or brought us forth—that is, had made us alive, as His begotten children, by the Word of Truth (1: 18); namely, by our LORD Jesus Christ, the Word of GOD, the Way, the Truth, and the Life; and that the wrath of man worketh not the Righteousness of GOD. There could not possibly be greater harmony between the two apostles. They are only at disagreement, when the one or the other, usually St. Paul, is perverted. Their harmony in speaking of the faith of the individual (whose very want of faith had brought forth Sin and Death), as having nothing to do with Justification before the perfectly righteous GOD, has already been shown. And they were the more earnest in the matter, because even in their days also there were pretenders to just such miserable justification; that is, to the making of a man to be accounted righteous by the awfully holy GOD because of the identical, imperfect

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. 2: 13.

faith which killed him! And if these very early upholders of justification by one's own faith had written books, like as did their follower Augustine, the great bishop of Hippo, they too would have been numbered among "the fathers," even ranking with the first! But how St. James ridicules them! And St. Paul with all consistency could have subscribed to every word of the ridicule.

§ 54. JAMES'S TEACHING (*cont.*)—"My brethren," cries St. James to these pretenders, comparing their Death-producing faith to the perfect, justifying Faith of the Son of GOD, "My brethren, ye have not the Faith of our LORD Jesus Christ, the LORD (and therefore only Source) of Glory (and, to give an obvious example even), with respect of persons." Note how in this, like St. Paul, he makes the perfection of the Faith of the true Justifier to necessitate impartiality in all that He does. And then he goes on to show the partial faith of the Christians of his day; who, just as they are in our own time, were obsequious and suppliant to the rich, even in their very meetings for the worship of the impartial God, and although the rich blasphemed the Name of their Divine Master, and were their personal oppressors; while to the poor at those meetings they were arrogant and contemptuous. And just as St. Paul had declared that it was only the just or righteous man who could live by his faith, so St. James tells the pretenders to self-justification, that their faith was imperfect, and hence not sufficient for the purpose, and their pretence therefore altogether vain, their conduct or "works" not being just or righteous to perfection; since they did not fulfil the royal law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself";

for that to respect persons was a sin, and made a man a transgressor of God's perfect law, just the same as if he became an adulterer or a murderer; and that, however little the transgression, inasmuch as its punishment was Death, the transgressor would fare no worse, even though he broke every commandment of the law.<sup>1</sup> What therefore did it profit, the apostle asked, to talk about their faith, when their works killed them? How, moreover, could faith, without works, even clothe the naked before men, or feed the hungry? So, no more could faith, without works which were altogether perfect, so clothe a man with righteousness before God, as to entitle him to life, or as to feed him with the Bread of Life. Such faith would be a dead, unproductive faith; that is, like their own, which had not made them irrelative of persons; and accordingly, before the law, would only adjudge the believer to be entitled to Death. The very devils, he continued, had true faith in respect of mere doctrine. They were not like the ignorant idolaters around them. They believed in the one God. That is to say, even the devils were too intelligent to bow down to altars and images of wood and stone, as believers in the idea of any divinity attaching to material things; but they did no good works, but evil; and so, according to the apostle, for all their faith, they trembled; as also, it may be added, ought we to do; for it is only perfect love or faith that should cast out fear.

§ 55. JAMES'S PERFECT AGREEMENT WITH PAUL.—And here the wisdom of inspiration caused the apostle

<sup>1</sup> Including "the work of faith"; that is, like the scribes and Pharisees, leaving "undone the weightier matters of the Law, judgment, and mercy, and faith." Matt. 23:23. 1 Th. 1:3. 2 Th. 1:11. And see John 6:29; 1 John 3:25.

to correct the mistake which is made because of the obscurity of St. Paul, when he likened the restoration of the life of Isaac by virtue of Abraham's Faith to the Faith of Christ which had restored the world to Life. For the sacred writer substantially tells us, that the justification in the particular instance in the life of Abraham was because his works were *imputed* perfect, and were conjoined with the faith, making *imputedly* a perfect faith; and thus—in the particular instance only, however—Abraham had had “accounted” to him a justifying righteousness, and became thereby the saviour of his child from natural death. And St. James himself also mentions another typical example of a Salvation from Death on a particular occasion because of good works for God, or that of Rahab, the harlot, who, in addition to saving the twelve representative spies of the tribes of Israel, had also, by her typical scarlet thread, been saved herself with her family, as representing the Gentiles.<sup>1</sup> Thus has the inspiration of God taken care to tell us plainly that there is no distinction whatever between faith and other works on the part of man to justify him unto life; but that to do this requires both perfect works and perfect faith, and that no man has either the one or the other; and that also he cannot have the one, without the other being conjoined therewith. Says St. James: “Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. . . . For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.” The apostle then adds a solemn injunction not to set ourselves up as so many *authoritative* teachers, or

<sup>1</sup> By conjoining Abraham with Rahab, whom he calls “the harlot,” the intention of the illustrations is made the more apparent.



masters, under fear of greater judgment upon any man who should do so;<sup>1</sup> telling us that in many things *we all* stumble; whereas it is only the perfect man who stumbleth not—not even by a word. And after showing how exceedingly we lack in perfection, and illustrating it by our words, he speaks again of the perfection of the Divine Righteousness, naming once more, among other things, its entire freedom from partiality. It is hardly necessary to add of St. James—for no one would be likely to assert the contrary—that, equally with St. Paul, he too is earnest in proclaiming the necessity of the Superstructure of individual good works, including faith, to be built unto perfection upon the Foundation laid for all by that perfect, irrespective Faith, which he mentions, “of the LORD Jesus Christ”;<sup>2</sup> through whom, he says, even through the Word of Truth, the Father, of His own will, or freely, has begotten us to be His sons. See then, when we interpret St. Paul according to his own words, instead of by mistranslations, how perfectly he and St. James agree.

§ 56.—SALIENT POINTS REVIEWED.—To make a brief review: The salient points in the teaching of Christianity, in which we find such unmistakable harmony, are these: 1. All men sinners; causing, 2. Universal Death. 3. Universal Recovery to a new Life by the irrespect-

<sup>1</sup> That is, without being, like the apostle, authorised and inspired; for it would violate the gift of revelation to all alike (Deut. 29: 29, etc.), and would be adding to or taking from the word of the LORD. But although no one should claim his own words to be specially authorised or inspired, it is yet made the solemn duty of every one to teach the word of the LORD according to the special ability which God gives him, and to be always ready to give a reason for the hope that is in him.

<sup>2</sup> “Building up yourselves on your *most holy* Faith, praying in the Holy Ghost,” or, rather, “a holy spirit.” Jude 20. See § 25(b).



ive, all-loving GOD through the Life and Death of the LORD Jesus Christ, or by GOD becoming Man, and making Himself a Substitute for man both in respect of Life and Death. 4. The new Life, therefore, necessarily a free Gift to the dead; who, though mercifully preserved in Life until, and in order to bring about, the consummation of the all-embracing Purpose, were nevertheless, under the sentence of the law, regarded as wholly dead,—dead as stones,—and in a correspondingly helpless condition. 5. As GOD is the sole Source of all Life, and the Author, in particular, of the new Life thus freely and irrespectively given to all when unable to acquire it for themselves, He is called, in a figure, its “Begetter,” that is, “our Father”;<sup>1</sup> and we all are said to be “regenerated,” or “born again,” and to have been made His children; these strong, figurative expressions serving to indicate at the same time a birth as helpless babes, or man’s utter dependence upon GOD for the new Life, and for the loftiest dignity to be derived from the Almighty Father. Hence, 6. As coming from GOD, the new Life thus begotten in us is declared to be, like the Father’s, pure, holy, and immortal.

But if this were all, and man had no longer a will as inviolably free as ever, even to the doing of evil if he chose, there would be taught incompatible things; for man would be represented as a child of GOD, and yet be a slave,—nay, as said before, a mere machine; and GOD would be an undignified machine-maker who worships and praises Himself through His machines with puerile satisfaction. Let us carefully observe, then, the supernaturally wise teaching which has solved this difficulty.

<sup>1</sup> The primary idea of the Prayer taught us by our LORD, through whom we are made children of GOD. Matt. 6:9.

§ 57. THE DUALITY OF MAN'S NATURE.—Accordingly, 7. The new Life given to man is indeed holy, and being born of God cannot sin; but the will of the man remains, and with all its self-acquired sinful taint. And that will may not be coerced; but the man is adjudged guilty of an Unpardonable Sin, which must be brought voluntarily by him to its Death. The Sinfulness of the will and the Mortality of the sin affect not, however, the new Life implanted within the man; which rather is in continual resistance to that Sinfulness to the end. And so the man lives on, with two separate, hostile natures; one of which St. Paul calls "the new man," which is the child of God, and the other "the old man," which is the child of the devil; the mortal nature finally to perish before the immortal nature, and to be burnt up, figuratively speaking, in the everlasting fire of God's wrath.<sup>1</sup> 8. Sinfulness being thus unpardonable, and yet the Sentence of Death having been removed from the sinful man himself by the great atoning Sacrifice of God in Flesh, who alone could remove that sentence and confer new, immortal Life, a *Second* (sort of) *Death* is substituted in the place of the old, *First Death*, as the proper divine sentence, under the changed circumstances, upon the Sinful Will. This *Second Death* consists in a strict, universal Judgment according to Deeds upon all Sinfulness. In other words, it is a Judgment which no longer threatens the Life of the sinner, nor does it coerce his Will, but one, nevertheless, which insists upon the absolute Death of his Sinfulness, and is so exacting and rigorous in this respect, that for its abolition no prayer avails,<sup>2</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> See § 124 (b).

<sup>2</sup> It would seem, however, from scriptural teaching and examples, that though full judgment according to the need is administered

no atoning Sacrifice is of use. Thus, in bringing Life and Immortality to light, GOD in Christ avoids either, on the one hand, becoming "a minister of sin,"—that is, avoids putting the sinful upon a par with the righteous,—or, on the other, coercing man's Sovereignty of Will. Rather, the divine justice is subserved; for the First Death would have been upon all sinners alike; whereas the Second Death is in the most rigorous sense according to deeds. Hence, 9. Only Repentance, *affecting the character*,<sup>1</sup> can mitigate and finally do away with the Judgment in its aspect of a curse. And because therefore such repentance is man's sole resource, and because indeed, in due logical order, the First Coming of Christ, by doing away with the old Death, brought this new sort of Death upon us,—a Death only to be avoided by the Death of one's Sinfulness,—most consistently the cry rang out upon the world at that Coming, "Repent ye: for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." The God in Christ, atoning

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to the sinful, it is modified or changed in form by circumstances, and particularly in view of the general need; giving ample scope for individual prayer, and for that of others for us. And, of course, prayer, which improves the character of the one who prays, has its due mitigating effect upon the judgment, causing the Sinfulness to become more and more of the *atoned-for past*, and the judgment to be to that extent no longer needed. "For He doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men" (Lam. 3: 33 and Heb. 12: 5-12 and contexts). Thus the vengeance of GOD alights upon the sinner (who is injuring himself and others), in so far as it is needed for his own and the general good; making the wrath of GOD a necessary form of a Father's love for His children one and all.

<sup>1</sup> That is, an actual inward *change* for the better, as distinguished from mere sorrow for sin, and from sentiment, emotion, and all the external acts of religion, private or public; all which are only of service to an individual in so far as they serve to produce the inward change; but which become a positive curse, developing the hypocrite and the heart of stone, where no inward change for the better is effected,

for the sins of men *that are past*,<sup>1</sup> immediately becomes the GOD in Christ insisting upon the voluntary abolition of all *existing* Sinfulness. In short, straightway, as *Eternal Justice* requires,—that Justice which is always of to-day,—the First Advent is succeeded by the Second. For the ineffably holy King of all the earth allows nothing to defile His Kingdom with impunity; but having died to give a new, holy Life to men, that the Purpose of His Holy Sacrifice may be consummated, and the full benefits thereof attained, He insists that a voluntary Repentance shall cause Sinfulness to be one of the sins of the past for which His Sacrifice was made, and the individual to be thus cleansed from all sin, without the least coercion of his GOD-given Sovereignty of Will.

§ 58. CHRIST'S WORK OF SACRIFICE FINISHED.—Accordingly, in respect of present Sinfulness, the great Sacrifice of GOD in Flesh being of no avail to save the sinner from that Judgment which the new order of things requires, but rather having necessitated for Sinfulness its due proportionate judgment, 10. The Work of Sacrifice was "finished"; and so, GOD in Flesh leaves the earth altogether, and ascends to Heaven, triumphing in His *finished* task; and thereupon, in order to consummate the Purpose of the Sacrifice thus made for all, or to bring about the filling up, as St. Paul says, of "that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ,"<sup>2</sup> He, in His now glorified Humanity, takes the seat which that Humanity had gained in behalf of man restored to Life, even at the right hand of power; and a second divine mission results. That is to say, 11. It is no more GOD in Flesh by His

<sup>1</sup> Rom. 3: 25; 2 Pet. 1: 9.

<sup>2</sup> Col. 1: 24.

great Sacrifice taking away the sins of the world, and renewing its Life for ever; for that Work is done, and the Sacrifice was once made for all time. But it is now God in Spirit, having no Body of Sacrifice to offer in atonement, and in consequence never pardoning the sinful. Instead, His task is strictly that of *Guidance*; and will never be done until He shall have guided into all truth. Insisting most rigorously upon the perfection of us all, He preserves at the same time the sovereignty of our several wills, and puts upon none a greater burden of judgment than he is able to bear, making no man's holiness a matter of compulsion, and allowing for none a new atoning sacrifice. 12. In necessary consistency with all this, the further teaching of Christianity is, that as Flesh, or in the Body, we shall henceforth know Christ no more.<sup>1</sup> For, in the very nature of things, the GOD of Sacrifice, whose Work is done *whether we will or not*, must depart, if He who only *guides* is to come.<sup>2</sup> And so, nevermore as Flesh, or in the Body, will He be present,—not since the advent of the Guiding Spirit; and nevermore can there be an availing Sacrifice offered for man, even as none is needed.<sup>3</sup> But in Spirit, by judgments and other persuasive influences innumerable,<sup>4</sup> He is with us “always unto the end of the æon.”<sup>5</sup> 13. From teaching such as this, the true position in the Christian scheme of all External Religion, both public and

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. 5: 16.

<sup>2</sup> John 16: 7-14.

<sup>3</sup> The doctrines of transubstantiation and consubstantiation illustrate by contrast the supernatural character of all this consistent teaching; in that the moment man intermeddles, incongruity results.

<sup>4</sup> For example, blessing voluntary prayer and praise and memorial sacraments and the assembling of ourselves together, etc.

<sup>5</sup> Matt. 28: 20.



private, becomes evident. In the New Testament, in precise consistency with its position in the Old,<sup>1</sup> it is ever subordinate to perfection of character, and only considered useful—otherwise, positively injurious and hardening—in so far as through it any reformation of character is attained.<sup>2</sup> If rites and ceremonies are therefore to be observed, it is only to call to our minds and impress upon our hearts the great truths behind them. And these are made few and simple, lest the symbolism should engage our attention to the injury of the truths. In Baptism, for example, is represented the soul-stirring thought that we all have together died in Christ, and in Him have risen again, cleansed before God, and endowed with a new, holy Life which can never die. In the Holy Supper we memorialise the precious Death which consummated the holy Life of Jesus, and gained the new, immortal Life of man. And in Confirmation we celebrate the Second Advent to us of our God, or that in the Spirit only; and are warned of the Sin which still remains Unpardonable, and which must therefore be gotten rid of by ourselves, even that of being unsanctified. And we remember how we are told that, until we submit to being guided by our Holy Sanctifier, His Advent brings to us *no comfort*, but instead, a Second Death, in place of the First, or the inevitable Judgment according to Deeds.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Sam. 15: 22. Ps. 40: 6-8; 50: 4-16; 51: 16, 17; 66: 18; 109: 7. Prov. 15: 8, 29; 21: 3, 27; 28: 9. Ec. 5: 1. Is. 1: 10-20; 61: 8;] 66: 1-4. Jer. 6: 19, 20; 7: 1-23; 14: 12. Lam. 2: 1, 4, 6, 7, 17, 20. Ezek. 23: 38, 39. Hos. 6: 6; 8: 11-13. Amos 5: 18, 21-27. Mic. 3: 9-12; 6: 6-13. Ex. 23: 20, 21, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. 5: 23, 24; 9: 13; 12: 1-12, 31-37; 15: 9. Mk. 12: 28-34. John 4: 23, 24; 5: 10-16, 22-30; 9: 31. Acts 3: 26; 8: 13, 21-24; 10: 34-43; 17: 24-31. Rom. 14: 17, 18. 1 Cor. 11: 17-34. Col. 1: 24, 28; 2: 16, 17, 20-23. Heb. 10: 1-31, 38, 39. Jas. 4: 3, etc.



§ 59. MAN'S HEAVEN-CONFERRED SOVEREIGNTY OF WILL.—Let us note particularly, indeed, throughout this teaching, the careful and consistent regard unvaryingly shown for man's Heaven-conferred Sovereignty of Will. We see, in the first place, how the divine Re-Creator, as God in Flesh, in taking away the *mortal* guilt of the sinner, did put no coercion upon the will, but simply re-created a new, holy, immortal Life, as a free Gift to each individual, leaving his natural will just as before; and in the second place, as GOD the Spirit, how He continues faithfully to preserve and guide that will. Hence, 14, the very Unpardonableness of the Sinful Will, seeing that GOD the Spirit came to guide into all truth, and that, while sinful, a man is in direct opposition to His non-compelling efforts, and his imperfect condition a constant sin against Him, for which no sacrifice can atone, but which rather *the Sacrifice of God in Flesh has continued in existence, and made unpardonable*;—even that very Unpardonableness is a Gospel to man; for it is the Good News of his unimpaired dignity and of the inviolability of his sovereignty; or that in his behalf GOD is unchangeably determined to be the KING only of *kings*, and the LORD only of *lords*, and is ever working in behalf of the individual's final glory. And let us observe another thing. For all this supernatural teaching, so wonderfully consistent in all its parts, is revealed to us not merely in strict conformity to the teaching of the two apostles above named, but—"here a little, and there a little"—through all the sacred writers; through, that is to say, in general, unlettered, ignorant men, many in number, writing at different times, and independently of each other! The very scattering of the several truths among them makes

the wonderful coherency of the truths, when put together, the greatest possible demonstration of their supernatural origin. And how consistent they all are with the facts of the natural world, both without us and within, just as we are experiencing them every day! To illustrate the harmony of the many sacred writers in this teaching throughout the Bible would be too large an undertaking. It is sufficient to have shown that the two who have been deemed the most decidedly contradictory are in such wonderful agreement.

§ 60. ST. PETER'S TEACHING.—But it may be worth while to call to remembrance in addition, how St. Peter in his First Epistle tells us that God in His abundant mercy had “begotten us again,” that is, regenerated us, “unto a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away”;<sup>1</sup> and that the sufferings of Christ which accomplished that salvation, and gave us “a good conscience before God,” or our justification, “through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,” was, in figure, a baptism, and an antitype<sup>2</sup> to the ark of Noah; which ark was therefore typical of Christ, and of what He Himself calls His baptism,<sup>3</sup> and which accordingly, with corresponding spiritual significance, had been represented as going down, with the

<sup>1</sup> 1 Pet. 1: 3, 4.

<sup>2</sup> The Greek is *antitupon*, from which our word antitype is derived. The idea of the word thus used by St. Peter is that of exact correspondence, in the imagery of a baptism, between the baptism of the Ark and of our LORD's justifying baptism. The derivative significance of the word is the exact impression made by a blow upon a receiving substance.

<sup>3</sup> Luke 12: 50. Matt. 20: 22, 23. Mk. 10: 38, 39.

eight<sup>1</sup> souls of the new world therein, into the very Water of Death that was destroying the old world, and as emerging therefrom with the new world saved.<sup>2</sup> And of the new Life re-begotten in us by Christ through His resurrection, or of our Salvation from Death, the apostle further tells us, that we have been redeemed, not with corruptible things, but with the precious Blood of Christ, the matter being foreknown from before the foundation of the world; or that we had

<sup>1</sup> The number typical of new Life.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Pet. 3: 18-4: 1. The passage tells how Christ "suffered for sins once, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God"; and how He went and told the good news unto the imprisoned spirits, who had been disobedient in Noah's day, while the ark, typical of the Redeemer, was being prepared. The passage then continues as follows: "Wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved right through water (which is here typical of Death). And that which is an antitype (*i. e.*, Christ in His baptism of suffering) now saves you, a baptism; (*Ὁ καὶ ὑμᾶς ἀντίτυπον νῦν σώζει βάπτισμα*; for the Ark in saving souls by baptism in the flood was typical of Christ's baptism of blood); not a putting away (in immediate destruction, even by Christ, and of course not by literal water in baptism, of our carnal nature, or) of filth of flesh, but a matter (or, *question*) of a good conscience before God through (the effectual justification demonstrated in) the resurrection of Jesus Christ." In what follows the apostle proclaims the ascension, the session at the right hand of power, and the sufferings of the judgment upon the quick and dead alike, and its similar purpose, and also the graduated intensity of the judgment (from its beginning "from the house of God") to those who do not obey the gospel of God. How different this is from the ordinary teaching of men! but how entirely in harmony with the Christian scheme as gathered from all the sacred writers! For so many think, we get to heaven quickly, or not at all.

In translating above "And *that which*," I assume the accent placed over "O to be correct. If, however, we write O, just as in Codex A, etc., and add the aspirate, making it "O (these old uncial MSS. being without aspirates or accents,) the translation becomes, with no accents, "And *He that* is an antitype," etc. Either way, the sense is the same, although, of the two translations, clearer without the accent. The Greek dative of the relative pronoun

been "begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of a living and abiding God";<sup>1</sup> and that now it was for us "as newborn babes" to put all evil from us, and to long for the reasonable, unadulterated milk, that we may grow thereby unto salvation;<sup>2</sup> and that being built upon our LORD as upon a Living Stone, we are all, as living stones,<sup>3</sup> built up into a spiritual house; and are "a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices (of praise<sup>4</sup>) acceptable to God through Jesus Christ";<sup>5</sup> while the disobedient are forcibly reminded that the Rock of Salvation upon

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translated in the a. v. is not supported by the best authority; but with it the rendering should have been by the a. v., "An antitype *wherunto* now saves you, a baptism," etc. The Greek word *antitupon* is also an adjective; and if so rendered here, the passage becomes, "And that which is an antitypical baptism now saves you." This does not change the sense, nor the <sup>o</sup>, and is the neatest translation of all, and probably the most correct. In what follows "filth's flesh," as is the literal, corresponds with "sin's flesh" in Rom. 8: 3, denoting the natural man, or child of wrath; thus making St. Peter's primary idea to be, that the baptism of Jesus into Death and His resurrection therefrom now save us, not by putting away or destroying our old man, but by begetting our justified new man, who is to do the destroying.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Pet. 1: 18-23. Or, "through a Word that liveth, and a God that abideth"; which is strictly literal, and perhaps a more forcible enunciation, in form, of the basis of our immortality.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Pet. 2: 1, 2.

<sup>3</sup> The metaphor indicates *Life out of Death*. In using the metaphor St. Peter is obviously referring to our LORD's previous use of it to denote that He was to recover mankind out of Hades. We are reminded also how Moses tells "the congregation" of the Rock of Salvation, styling it "the Rock that begat thee." Deut. 32: 4, 13, 15, 18, 30, 31, 39, 40.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Pet. 2: 9.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Pet. 2: 4, 5, 9. "Acceptable," because based upon the righteousness of Christ, making us "as free . . . servants of God" (verse 16). Observe: not actually free, nor faithful servants; but "as free" and "as servants of God"; as is the careful language of inspiration from the pen of a common fisherman.

which they have been built in Immortal Life has surely brought upon them the Judgment according to their deeds; the apostle styling it in their case "a Stone of Stumbling, and a Rock of Offence."<sup>1</sup> Indeed, in plain terms, the apostle proclaims both the judgment and its object to apply also to the life beyond the grave, saying, "For for this cause was the gospel preached also to the dead, that they might be judged indeed like men in flesh, but live like God in spirit."<sup>2</sup>

§ 61. ST. PETER'S TEACHING (*Cont.*).—How carefully in all this, and how repeatedly, St. Peter represents, as did his fellow apostles, our new birth, or "being born again," to be only of God's begetting through the resurrection, therein asserting the perfection of the Work of Christ; while he manifests our own position in the matter by his downright designation of us as *newborn babes*; and immediately insists, that we must grow into holiness as our own bounden duty, and that we may "glorify God in a day<sup>3</sup> of visitation"; thus seeking to escape from the constant judgment visited upon all imperfection. For the apostle not only teaches our regeneration to be effected, when utterly helpless, through Christ, and the consequent obligation which rests upon us, but he repeatedly associates therewith the Work of the second visitation, or of the "sanctification of the Spirit."<sup>4</sup> Nay, in the very first sermon that was preached after the great pentecostal outpouring, he expressly declared, with em-

<sup>1</sup> 1 Pet. 2: 8.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Pet. 4: 5, 6.

<sup>3</sup> Not "*the day*" (1 Pet. 2: 12). The passage refers to the great truth that every sin, even "an idle word," has "a day of judgment."

<sup>4</sup> 1 Pet. 1: 2, 11, 22, and generally the passages relating to judgment.



phasis, that that outpouring, according to prophecy, was "upon *all flesh*," and had been shed forth from the right hand of God after the exaltation thereto of the LORD Jesus.<sup>1</sup> And in his Second Epistle, obviously referring to our dual birth, through Christ and the Spirit, St. Peter announces that our LORD's "Divine Power hath given us all things that pertain unto Life and Godliness," or hath given us both Life and the Spirit. And he urges us, in addition, not to forget that we have been purged from our old sins, but to make our calling and election sure; warning us that he himself had seen as an eye-witness the power and *coming* of the LORD Jesus Christ in majesty, at the transfiguration,<sup>2</sup>—in other words, His Second Advent as the Judge of all the earth;<sup>3</sup> while from the sure word of prophecy, made more sure by his personal vision, he cites examples to illustrate the certainty of the *constant* judgment upon men according to their deeds; or that the judgment is very far from being delayed unto another life, but cometh quickly, even here and now, without lingering or slumbering; yea, "in their destroying surely" being "destroyed; suffering wrong as the hire of wrongdoing."<sup>4</sup> And St. Peter himself is careful to declare the consistency of his own teaching with that of St. Paul; although, he says, men wrest the words of the latter, as they do the other scriptures,

<sup>1</sup> Acts 2: 16, 17, 33.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Pet. 1: 3, 9, 10, 16.

<sup>3</sup> See Matt. 16: 27, 28. Attended by the law and the prophets,— "the word that I have spoken," which shall judge us in this last day;—so was He seen of St. Peter. See 2 Pet. 2: 3.

<sup>4</sup> 2 Pet. 2: 1, 3, 17, etc. The true idea of 2: 9 (to which 2: 4 and 3: 7 correspond, when properly translated, telling of *present* judgment) is, "to keep the unrighteous *during* (not, *unto*) a day of judgment to be punished"—*i. e.*, punished "*for* a judgment of a great day" (Jude 6). See §§ 10, 82, and 82(a).



unto their own destruction.<sup>1</sup> The truth of this finds illustration in allegations of Pauline and Petrine doctrinal contentions,<sup>2</sup> (in spite of St. Peter's express statement of the harmony of views between him and his "beloved brother Paul,") as well as in the general inability of readers to recognise the exact consonance of the utterances of St. James with those of St. Paul; owing in both cases to the gross misconstructions which have been put upon the latter's words in particular, and also upon those of the other two writers.

§ 62. SUPERNATURAL AGREEMENT OF NEW TESTAMENT WRITERS.—For special reasons there should be given one more example of the wonderful accord of the several sacred authors in the deep, supernatural teaching of the Christian scheme. Like the apostles Peter and James, St. John also was an humble, ordinary fisherman; and if we may judge by his frequent crudities of expression, and his occasional awkwardness—shall I say puerility?—of style, was, in an intellectual point of view, although so highly spiritual, the least gifted of the unlettered three. And yet, in everything that he says, we recognise how perfectly in line he is with the deep and wondrous revelations received by him from our Divine Master, and with the profound reasonings of St. Paul. And in everything there is the same correspondence with the Christian scheme as above set forth. Indeed, it is from his writings, crude and often self-contradictory as they appear, that are to be gathered some of the plainest of the consistent

<sup>1</sup> 2 Pet. 3: 15, 16.

<sup>2</sup> St. Paul's difference with St. Peter in Gal. 2 ch. was avowedly not about doctrine, but of practices which he feared would tend to the compromise of doctrine.

enunciations of deep Christian truth. In language which should have prevented the prevalence of false ideas, and most often in the very words of the Master, he declares Jesus to be the Life of the world, through whom alone men are divinely born, or given a new Life, even when unwilling to receive Him for a Saviour;<sup>1</sup> that His lifting up did draw all men unto Him, and save the world;<sup>2</sup> that without this Sacrifice of His Flesh and Blood men could not have Life; but that with it we have everlasting Life, and shall be raised up at last;<sup>3</sup> and that when His Sacrifice was made, and His Work was done, it then became the proper thing for Him to go away, and leave the earth altogether in His Body which had been offered in Sacrifice; for the reason that no Sacrifice of that Body would any more be necessary. The one Sacrifice having done all for sinners which could be done by sacrifice, and the work of free cleansing being accomplished, the Sacrifice, the apostle tells us, must cease and be removed, in order that the Spirit who guides, instead of pardoning or atoning, may come.<sup>4</sup>

§ 63. UNLETTERED DISCIPLES TAUGHT BY INSPIRING SPIRIT.—In accordance with this profound teaching, given us from the lips of the Master by His unlettered disciple, who must, indeed, have had all things brought to his recollection by the inspiring Spirit,—a teaching, in fact, so utterly out of the ordinary run of men's thoughts, that most Christians do not even yet seem to have arrived at its meaning,<sup>5</sup>—in the apostle's First

<sup>1</sup> John 1: 4, 9, 11-13, 29, 33; 6: 33, 39, 50-58; 5: 23. 1 John 2: 2, 29, etc.

<sup>2</sup> John 12: 32, 33; 3: 14, 17.

<sup>3</sup> John 6: 32-63.

<sup>4</sup> John 16: 7-16.

<sup>5</sup> How quickly would alleged priestly sacrifices of the Body of

Epistle he tells first "of the Word of Life," even as he tells first in his Gospel of the Word of God who is the Life of men; and then he proceeds to tell of the universality of sin, and proclaims, "that we have passed from Death into Life,"<sup>1</sup> or from Darkness into Light, through Jesus Christ the Righteous, whose Blood cleanseth us from all sin;<sup>2</sup>—in other words, that the great work of begetting new Life in men had been wrought out solely by His righteous Life and atoning Death. And the apostle does not leave the free reception by all of the new Life to inference, even as he had not done in his Gospel; but declares "Jesus Christ the Righteous" to be "a Propitiation for our sins; (adding, lest his pronoun should be taken in a limited sense,) and not for ours only, but also for the whole world."<sup>3</sup> And in addition to thus showing how "God hath sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might *live* through Him,"<sup>4</sup> he proclaims that we have received also the Spirit; the need for man to be born of which he had recorded in his Gospel from the lips of the Master; and that the anointing of the Holy One which we have thus received abideth in us for our guidance; and that we have the proof in the righteousness within us, and are therefore sons of God; although "the world," he says,—an expression which is large enough to include ourselves and all men, and would seem to designate "the old man" of St. Paul,—does not know that which is thus of the holy God.<sup>5</sup> It can

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Christ cease, if they had!—yea, and some other "churchly" notions also!

<sup>1</sup> I John 3: 14.

<sup>2</sup> I John 1: 5-10.

<sup>3</sup> I John 2: 1, 2.

<sup>4</sup> I John 4: 9.

<sup>5</sup> I John 2: 3-5, 20, 21, 27, 29; 3: 1, 2, 6-10, 14, 19, 24; 4: 7, 8, 13, 16; 5: 10, 11.

hardly designate exclusively those who are unbelievers in the Christian religion. For, in point of fact, unbelievers undoubtedly show themselves by the good that is in them, and are declared in the Bible, to be the sons of GOD; and they often also recognise the fact; as in the case of the Greek poet of whom St. Paul speaks.<sup>1</sup> For, certainly, the same logic applies to them as to Christians. And so St. John says, "If ye know that He is righteous, ye know that also *every one* that doeth the righteousness has been begotten of Him."<sup>2</sup> But of course, with unbelievers, as with us, "the old man" of the heart, not having, like its opponent the new man, the inward proof, and having no capacity for recognising externally that which is of GOD, does not know, even as St. John says, the Son of GOD, but in every case dares to keep up blindly his bitter struggle for the mastery over the will, until he meets his final death.<sup>3</sup>

§ 64. AGREEMENT OF JOHN WITH JESUS.—As to "the world" then, or the old man within us all, St. John teaches, that just as all goodness is of GOD, and manifests the doer to be born of Him, or that He had given him Life for Death, so, the evil deeds of a man manifest him to be a child of the devil. Hence, while the sacred writer proclaims all mankind, notwithstanding their wickedness, to be equal sharers in the pro-

<sup>1</sup> Acts 17: 28.

<sup>2</sup> 1 John 2: 29. See 3: 24; 4: 13, etc. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God." Rom. 8: 16. "Hereby know we that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His spirit." 1 John 4: 13.

<sup>3</sup> "And the Life was the Light of men. And the Light shineth in the Darkness; and the Darkness hath not taken it in." John 1: 4, 5. See 3: 19. 1 Cor. 2: 14.

pitiation made by Him who came to die for all sinners, and to have received the anointing of the Spirit, yet is he just as explicit in declaring them, because of that wickedness, to be children of the devil.<sup>1</sup> In this teaching the disciple follows the Master; our LORD having Himself called the devil the father of lying, and the Jews the children of the devil, even while He admitted them to be children of Abraham, and recognised all men to be children of GOD.<sup>2</sup> "For the tree is known by its fruit"; and even if the dual nature of mankind had not been thus authoritatively revealed, the fact and its universality should be of common knowledge. For our daily experience confirms St. John in showing all men to be sinners, and that if any deny it in respect of themselves, they are self-deceived, and the truth is not in them.<sup>3</sup> And yet, on the other hand, because love is of God, when we love one another, to use St. John's own words, "we know that we have passed *from Death into Life*, (or, are 'born again,' even) because we love the brethren." Most reasonably, therefore, the inspired apostle proclaims, that, not merely the converted, not merely the baptised, but "*every one that loveth is born of God*, and knoweth GOD."<sup>4</sup> When accordingly we read in the apostle's writings, and in his statements of our LORD's words, the expression "the world," it would be well to look within ourselves, as well as to the world without. Do we wonder, so looking, that "the old man," or "the world" within us, cannot receive the Comforter, before whose terrible judgments it has such reason to tremble?<sup>5</sup> Or that our Saviour, who desired

<sup>1</sup> 1 John 3: 6-10.    <sup>2</sup> John 8: 37-44, 56.    <sup>3</sup> 1 John 1: 8, 10.

<sup>4</sup> 1 John 4: 7, 8; 3: 14. It follows, that every one that loveth is born of Water and the Spirit.

<sup>5</sup> John 14: 17; 16: 8.    Heb. 10: 26-31.

of all things the old man's destruction, refused to pray for "the world," although, in the ordinary sense, it was "the world" which He came not to condemn, but to save.<sup>1</sup> Instead, He prayed only for them which had been given Him;<sup>2</sup> even for the new, holy sons of God about to be begotten through Him.<sup>3</sup>

§ 65. JOHN, AND THE UNPARDONABLE SIN.—And this brings us to one more point in this ordinary fisherman's most extraordinary, supernatural adherence to the Christian scheme, however profound its details.<sup>4</sup> I refer to his many allusions to the Unpardonable Sin—the Sin unto Death—for which, following the Master, he would not bid us pray. In giving our Saviour's prayer above referred to, distinguishing between "the world" and those who were His own, the apostle thus records what Jesus declared of His representative disciples, and tells how He afterwards extended His prayer to those who were to believe in Him through their word.<sup>5</sup> Jesus said, "I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them,<sup>6</sup> because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them away (or, *lift them*) from the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil (one).<sup>7</sup> They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.<sup>8</sup> Sanctify them through

<sup>1</sup> John 3: 17.

<sup>2</sup> John 12: 31, 32.

<sup>3</sup> John 3: 3, 5. Eph. 1: 5, 10. 1 Pet. 1: 3, 23. Jas. 1: 18.

<sup>4</sup> Are, in general, "the wise" equal to it even nowadays?

<sup>5</sup> John 17: 20.

<sup>6</sup> "It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." Rom. 7: 17. See context as to the war between the flesh and the spirit.

<sup>7</sup> Lit. "the evil." Does the article refer back to "the world," and should it be translated "that"?

<sup>8</sup> This repetition, and the continual dwelling upon "the world,"



(or, *by*)<sup>1</sup> thy truth: thy word is truth.”<sup>2</sup> That is to say, in compliance with the divine will, Jesus in His human nature will not pray of course for the world within us; nor again that *coercive* power from on High shall determine the exaltation of His people, or even their divorce from the old man within, through the latter’s *compulsory* destruction. This had been in substance the devil’s wily appeal to the merciful heart of the Redeemer in His human nature on the mountain of temptation; and, if listened to, would have given Him indeed the kingdoms of the world, but a very miserable glory of them;<sup>3</sup> even the mockery of a kingdom of slavish machines. But in the place of this enforced sanctification, the will of the true Father of sovereign children is, to allow them to fight their own battle with “the world,” whether the world within or the world without, and to have all the glory of their victory; and to that end only to become sanctified through the instrumentality of GOD’S word of truth, even, that is to say, through their own faith in that word.<sup>4</sup> They must not be coercively taken from the

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would seem to imply a special signification in the phrase to which attention would be called—“that evil one.”

<sup>1</sup> It is the instrumental sense of the Greek preposition which is intended; as shown also by verse 20; “the word” and “the truth” having here the same meaning.

<sup>2</sup> John 17: 14-17.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. 4: 8-10.

<sup>4</sup> The guiding resources of the Spirit must of course not be ignored. For “it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because *the Spirit is the truth.*” 1 John 5: 6. “Ye are of GOD, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world. They are of the world: therefore speak they from that world, and the world heareth them. We are of GOD: he that knoweth GOD heareth us; he that is not of GOD heareth us not. By this we know *the spirit of truth*, and *the spirit of error.*” 1 John 4: 4-6. See John 8: 32.

world, but must themselves cast out the world, fighting the old man within, even to his death.

§ 66. THE PURPOSE OF JUDGMENT.—To the same effect St. John records Him to have said, let us remember, after declaring the purpose of “all judgment” to be, “that all (men) may honour the Son, even as they honour the Father,” as follows: “I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of Him that hath sent me.”<sup>1</sup> And this, once more, is the very gist of the statement of Jesus, as told by St. John, that He Himself in the Body must depart, in order that the One who is the unpardoning Reprover of sin, even the Holy Spirit, may assume His office in guiding men heavenward;<sup>2</sup> or that, sacrifice having done all it properly could without interfering with the divinely bestowed free-will of man, thenceforth man’s divine sovereignty must be carefully guarded; and that accordingly it becomes man’s honourable privilege to conquer the warring child of the devil within him; thus making the existence of any Sinfulness of the sovereign will unpardonable, and leaving to the Divine Judge the exercise of unavoidable Judgment according to the facts, or *as He hears*. As it is said in the Epistle to the Hebrews to the same effect, “For if we sin of free-will,” now that we have a re-created Life which knows the truth,<sup>3</sup> “there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain (or, *some*) fearful reception of Judgment, even a fierceness of fire, which shall devour the adversaries”; *i. e.* shall devour, instead of pardon, the children of the devil.<sup>4</sup> The sins that have developed,

<sup>1</sup> John 5: 22, 23, 30.

<sup>2</sup> John 16: 7-13.

<sup>3</sup> 1 John 5: 19, 20; 2: 20, 21, 27; 3: 24; John 1: 14, 16, 17.

<sup>4</sup> Heb. 10: 26, 27. The Greek “some,” or “a certain amount of,”

*and are past*, are as the fruit of a corrupt tree, even what the evil heart has brought forth;<sup>1</sup> and are as the heavy burden borne for us by the Son of man. To extend the cleansing benefits of sacrifice, however, to *present* Sinfulness, could not be without infringing upon the sovereignty of the will; and therefore for the evil heart itself, for the corrupt tree, there must be no sacrifice, but judgment; or the substituted coming of the Reprover for the Sacrificer; even the Second Advent, with all the rigorous justice of the holy God, extending even to an idle word.<sup>2</sup>

§ 67. THE CHURCH AND THE UNPARDONABLE SIN.— Another allusion by our LORD to the Unpardonable Sin, which St. John records, is interesting as showing the exclusively *persuasive* character of the instrumentalities of the organised Church in the eye of its great Founder. For Jesus plainly tells us that, on the one

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indicates no unlimited judgment, but one proportioned to the case. It is not, it may be added, *certain* in the sense of *sure*, although, of course, the judgment is sure.

<sup>1</sup> These, let us not forget, are the expressions used by our Lord Himself in explaining the distinction between the *sins* against the Son of man and the *sin* against the Holy Ghost. The heart that could blaspheme what Jesus was doing by the Spirit of God as being done by Beelzebub, must be judged; for it cannot be pardoned. But the actual words uttered are pardonable, and are expressly said to be spoken against the Son of man (Matt. 12:31-37). If what has been done were not pardonable, man would be helpless. But the corrupt tree that keeps producing evil fruit requires judgment. What a simple matter this, which "the wise," for all the long centuries, have not been able to explain! When understood, we find, as usual, "the simplicity that is in Christ"; but we recognise, none the less, how profound and supernatural are these repeated and always consistent utterances of Holy Writ, so many in number, and given to us by such men as publicans and fishermen!

<sup>2</sup> Matt. 12: 24, 27, 28, 36, 37.

hand, there is gladly ratified in Heaven<sup>1</sup> whatever success men may have in persuading one another to *get rid of* their Sinfulness, and that, on the other, the same ratification will be rigidly given to their failure. "Of whomsoever ye may loose (or, *get rid of*)<sup>2</sup> their<sup>3</sup> sins, they are loosed (or, *gotten rid of*) unto them; and of whomsoever ye may retain (them), they are retained.<sup>4</sup> These words were uttered by our LORD when He sent forth His disciples to their great persuasive work; and to assist them therein they received from Him a special gift of the Holy Spirit,—that is to say, of that same Spirit who comes to *guide* us into all truth. In fact, it is particularly noticeable in what an entirely subordinate position St. John, the apostle nearest to our LORD, places, in all his writings, the rites and ceremonies of external religion. For that matter, not once is even Christian Baptism, or the LORD's Supper, or Confirmation mentioned by this apostle; although men in the materialistic spirit of ecclesiasticism have endeavoured to bend from their proper meaning the parabolic words which he records, telling of the necessity of the new birth, and of the Sacrifice of the Flesh and Blood of the Redeemer for the world's Life. The apostle seems, indeed, to be so thoroughly engrossed with the weightier matters of Mercy and Judgment and Faith,—that is, in holding forth to men the Gospel of their Salvation from Death, and in warning them of the consequences in that prolonged Second Death

<sup>1</sup> Luke 15: 10, with context.

<sup>2</sup> The derivative meaning is *send away* or *get rid of*. It is translated *suffer* in Matt. 3: 15; 19: 14; 23: 13 (14). Mk. 1: 34; 5: 19, 37; 7: 12; 10: 14; 11: 16, etc.; also *to leave*, *let*, *let alone*, etc., in many passages; and *remit* or *forgive* in others. But the idea here is to get freed from.

<sup>3</sup> Lit. *the*.

<sup>4</sup> John 20: 22, 23.

which awaits all Sinfulness,—that he utterly ignores the rites and ceremonies of the organic Church, however useful and indispensable they may be for their proper purpose.

§ 68. THE PERSUASIVE POWERS OF THE CHURCH.— Still, in John 20: 22, 23, just above quoted, St. John emphasises from our LORD'S lips the importance to men of the persuasive powers of the Church. Alas, that the craving spirit of ecclesiasticism, pursuing its wonted tendencies as exhibited the world over through all history, and in all forms of religion, should have dared to abuse to its purposes this and other similar, most awful passages; and, as though utterly failing to tremble at the solemn responsibilities therein imposed upon every individual in respect of his brother's soul, should be chiefly zealous to derive from the passages some extraordinary, supernatural powers to be exercised by the few over their fellows, which might gratify human pride, or further human ambition. That however it was not the intention of the Divine Speaker to make of these words of fearful warning in any respect an *exclusive* ministerial commission, or a grant of *exclusive* official power, but that they were spoken to us all, through the apostles as our common representatives, although, in the connection, intended to stimulate on this particular occasion the ministry more especially to a zealous discharge of their sacred office, is made evident by their universal application in the eighteenth chapter of St. Matthew. For therein Jesus, pursuing the great subject of which He had been speaking, to wit, the duty of each individual to do all that he can to seek out and to save that which is perishing no matter how humble it may be, particularly including in his



efforts the spiritual welfare of little children, goes on to bid any member of any "congregation," who has an offending brother,—His more immediate reference being naturally to the synagogues of His day, and to His Jewish disciples as members of one or other of those synagogues,<sup>1</sup>—first to use his individual powers of persuasion to induce the erring brother to repent, speaking to him alone, or privately. If success attends the private effort, it is well; as it is said, "Thou hast gained thy brother." But if not, then the Master bids, "Be a little more open in thy efforts. Seek the aid of others; but, in the beginning, only *one or two more*"; thus adding the influence of others to thine own;—as it is said, that "every word may be established," or gain force. "If the second attempt, however, also prove a failure," Jesus continues, "give up the secret and semi-secret methods altogether, and try publicity. *Tell it to the congregation.* Bring everybody now you can to your aid." For who has not experienced the wonderful power and influence of numbers? And to this power and influence Jesus also joins a promise. "I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father who is in Heaven. For where two or three are

<sup>1</sup> The Greek *sunagōgē* (synagogue) literally means "a gathering together," and therefore corresponds in signification with the Greek *ekklesia* twice used in Matt. 18: 17, which also means "a congregation." That it so means in that passage, or has its proper sense, is obvious from the context, and because there is no reason why it should suddenly change its sense from the exclusive one which it always previously had. Matt. 16: 18 and 18: 17 are the first times in all history that the translation "church" was prematurely forced upon the word. It was much later when it acquired that meaning.



gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." <sup>1</sup>

§ 69. EFFORTS WITH INDIVIDUAL AND CONGREGATION.—Observe particularly in all this how our efforts are directed to move on to an exhaustive climax of numbers. The individual is commanded first to use his own powers with the offending brother in a private manner, or to go to him "alone." Then to try "one or two more." And then the whole congregation. What an anti-climax we should make of it, if, in the face of what is expressly said, or of our own arbitrary will, we should interpret: First, alone; then, one or two more; and then, these methods failing, go back to one again—a priest! And after that, the interpretation is, or without resorting to the public method at all, that there is no more to be done! For the priest

<sup>1</sup> Nothing better demonstrates the folly of those who do not regularly attend the public services of the Church, on the fallacious ground that they can as well serve God at home. In addition to their actual disobedience, instead of "serving God," they deprive themselves both of the great power and influence of numbers and of the unfailing promise of Jesus. They cannot afford thus to rely on their own unaided efforts. At best, we do not serve God as we ought; and why should we disregard the aid which God Himself affords to those who will voluntarily seek therefor? Is it not braving greater judgment and a longer hell? Hear again from the inspired text: "And let us *consider one another to provoke unto love and good works; not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting (one another); and so much the more, as ye see the day (i.e., of triumph) drawing nigh.*" That is, instead of relying on our own unaided efforts because we are becoming better men, let us speed the day of triumph, by redoubling the seeking of mutual aid, the more we feel the exhilarating approach of that day;—as St. Peter says, "looking for and speeding the coming of the day of God," even to "each man in his own order." Heb. 10: 24, 25. 2 Pet. 3: 12. 1 Cor. 15: 23.

—*one man*—makes, it is said, our LORD's *congregation* or so-called *church*,—His "assembly" or "gathering together!" And yet His explanatory phrase is, "where *two* or *three* are gathered together"; and even this illustrates really but the preliminary or semi-private method, before the final resort to the *congregation*. And it is for this last public and open appeal that ecclesiasticism would substitute but *one man*! And that one man, moreover, in the strictest privacy, or again "alone"! Nay, not even this; for observe: Our LORD directs the offended to do the telling to the congregation, and thereby openly expose the offender. Not so ecclesiasticism; which says nothing at all of the offended; declaring instead, that the offender it is—the very one who would not listen when expostulated with alone, or, thereafter, by the one or two more—who shall now voluntarily, though still perverse, proceed to do the telling!—not, however, to the congregation, according to the words of the command, but to some priest of his own selection! What an anticlimax! did I say? In truth, what a farce! And the farce is made of the words of the LORD Himself! The offended, in the face of the Master's words, is to cease his efforts to save his brother; and thereupon the perverse brother, who persists in his offending, is to take the matter up, and, substituting a secret confabulation with his selected priest, get off from being regarded "as an heathen man and a publican."<sup>1</sup> Verily, as against our LORD Himself, what is it that ecclesiasticism will not dare? what, as against common sense, that it will not assume and assert to gain its ends? Quite different from this, the idea of our LORD is, to urge, and keep urging, each individual soul into personal, re-

<sup>1</sup> Or, more strictly, "as the Gentile and the publican."

sponsible action to save a perishing brother; first inciting him to assume the responsibility alone, as good policy would dictate, then to stir up one or two more, and at last the whole congregation,—even the congregation of which himself and the offending “brother” are members. And Jesus Himself, let me repeat, expressly explains His meaning; telling us, at the same time, and in immediate connection, of the power of numbers, when they act together, in humble dependence upon Heaven, to accomplish a definite purpose; and of His aiding presence with them. And it is because thereof that He would stimulate the private soul, the individual, to constant holy endeavour, or never to give up while there is hope. And of priests, or of “the Church” as an official, authoritative body, (or otherwise than of a separate congregation thereof,) or of any “representative” of the Church, He says nothing at all. And here note, how well St. Peter, to whom similar words to those presently to be quoted had been spoken, and who now heard them again addressed to all, understood the matter, and the constancy of effort required of all. Earnestly he inquires, “LORD, *how oft* shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?” And note also the unabated persistency of effort implied in the Master’s answer; and how binding it is upon every one, whether apostle, bishop, presbyter, or layman:—“Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven.” And He followed up His answer by a parable, wherein He reveals to us that the unforgiving shall never escape from the prison of judgment, or from “the tormentors,” until what is due to our heavenly Father shall be fully paid; in other words, that we shall not be delivered from evil, but

shall only be forgiven, just as we forgive, until our perfection shall be like that of the Father Himself.<sup>1</sup> And thus we perceive once more, how, both unto the human, would-be absolver, and him whom he vainly strives authoritatively to absolve, the unpardonable sin still remains, while existing, wholly unpardonable; and that with both the one and the other the only effectual absolution lies in the attainment of perfection—even in the final death of “the old man” or “the evil one” within; thus causing the individual to cease altogether to be “the child of the devil,” and to be wholly and alone “the child of God.”

§ 70. “BINDING AND LOOSING,” SPOKEN TO CONGREGATION.—Some, indeed, not perceiving how suicidal or destructive of their own position, their argument respecting binding and loosing through human instrumentality would be, strive to gain a point by assuming what is not true, to wit, that on the occasion only apostles were present, and that to these only, and no others, the words about binding and loosing were addressed. This downright assumption is, however, as we shall see, in the face of the facts. But if even it were true, what would follow? Verily, that inspired apostles only, and Peter among them, are commanded to “tell it unto the congregation!” and that, too, by way of climax, even as a final and conclusive appeal! That is, on the assumption of ecclesiasticism, whatever the supernatural authority and power it would claim to be conveyed by the words in question would be vested supremely in no single official, however high, but in the local congregation—yea, whether over the ministry, or even over the inspired apostles themselves,

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 5: 26, 48; 6: 12, 13; 18: 21-35.

including Peter; who would all be positively, and, by the assumption, *exclusively* commanded to do the telling unto the congregation. If therefore the assumption were true, it would be of itself the death-blow to priestly absolution, and to all the claims of ecclesiasticism based upon the words of our LORD; just as it is also the death-blow to those claims to have the assumption false, and the words to be addressed to all alike as enjoying a common responsibility. Indeed, it only makes a more conclusive showing forth of the baselessness of priestly absolution, that the claims should be overthrown equally as well, whether the words are assumed to be addressed to apostles only, or whether we recognise in them a plain address to every one without exception. But though the uselessness of the assumption to effect its object is manifest, and is rather of service as strongly exhibiting the logical helplessness and the recklessness and blindness of ecclesiasticism, it demands further consideration. For by what right do men thus venturesomely make mere assumptions to prove their preposterous supernatural claims? Here is a discourse which throughout shows that it is intended for all; and it is universally admitted to be so as to the greater portion. For surely it will not be claimed by any one, and least of all by ecclesiasticism, that only the ministry need to be converted, and become as little children; or that they only are required to be mindful of others, and to exercise a constant spirit of forgiveness to offenders, as well as of forbearance to helpless debtors. Whence, then, the assumed prerogative of severing one portion of the discourse from the rest as applicable only to priests, who are not once mentioned therein; while the rest, and far the larger portion, is confessed to be for all?



And yet the private and personal, instead of any official application of the passage made by St. Peter, with the answer of our LORD that forgiveness is to be granted "till seventy times seven," is admitted by these arbitrary assumers themselves to show a universal obligation! Surely conclusions should be drawn on some better basis than that of our own sweet will. A forcible illustration of the possession by every one of the power of binding and loosing, yea, of the power of the keys, is the condemnation uttered by our LORD to the scribes and Pharisees for their abuse of just this very power. He says: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye *shut up* the kindgom of heaven against men: for ye go not in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in" (Matt. 23: 13). Surely, if even the scribes and Pharisees were recognised by our LORD Himself as having this fearful power, we can hardly deny its possession to any one.

§ 71. "BINDING AND LOOSING" NOT SPOKEN TO PRIESTS AND BISHOPS.—For the matter of that, in reference to this lugging in of the unmentioned priests to become the sole claimants of the power of binding and loosing, it may be as well to mention, that at the time when the words recorded by St. Matthew were uttered, there were no priests of the Christian Church, and no bishops,<sup>1</sup> to hear and exclusively appropriate

<sup>1</sup> Even the apostles themselves, prior to receiving their commission after the resurrection, when only the Gospel could be truly preached, or after Jesus had gained the victory over Death, together with all power in heaven and on earth, were in general styled simply "disciples," just the same as other believers. On the very rare occasions that they are termed "apostles," it seems to be only to distinguish them from other believers. On the par-



the arbitrarily selected portion. For the ministry had not been commissioned, because the Work of Christ was still unaccomplished, and the Gospel could not be preached. It was then only at hand. And furthermore, in point of fact, there were others present, besides the twelve, to hear the whole discourse.<sup>1</sup> For Jesus is said, as usual, to be speaking to the disciples; and of these, we know, there was a considerable company, and among them those who “compañied” with the twelve “all the time that the LORD Jesus

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ticular occasion when the words about binding and loosing were used, as told of in Matt. 18, the word employed both in chapter and context is always “disciples”—never *apostles*; and, as remarked in the text, there were other *disciples* present, even, it would appear, women and children; of which last Jesus called one to Him as an object lesson, to illustrate His remarks against aspiring to power over others, and showing on the contrary, that we ought rather to feel our responsibility to the weak and helpless, and to realise that we may have to account for binding, where we should have loosed. In fine, we should take care to recognise the continuity of thought running through the whole chapter, instead of arbitrarily severing one part from another, to suit our own purposes.

<sup>1</sup> There is one thing which, if the reader will take the trouble, he can easily verify for himself, and which should be again and again impressed upon his mind, to wit, that almost everything said to apostles, or to an apostle, by our LORD, is of universal application. That is, the disciples received their instructions in trust for the world, to which, in due time, the truths were to be proclaimed, according as the world should be able to receive them. See, for an example, Luke 12: 1, etc.; and for an exception, emphasising the rule, 41, etc. Even the application in this passage of stewardship to the future ministry, however, admits of a like universal application to those who have special gifts of any sort; and in all likelihood no one ever reads the passage without perceiving its application to himself. Furthermore, there is never indicated by our LORD that anything said by Him pertained to an exclusive *clerical* function which was to be handed down to successors. The ministry as we have it is the inspired work of the apostles *after* the descent of the Holy Ghost. From these considerations it follows, that a heavy burden of proof rests upon

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went in and out among" them.<sup>1</sup> On this occasion the audience probably included also, as we know was usual, a number of women, especially as He was at the time entertained at a house, and there was present at least one "little child." To such a mixed audience, then, the discourse was given; and its language throughout was general to them all; and no one may presume of his own arbitrary will, after allowing the greater portion to be for everybody, to call out at discretion one portion to be exclusively for the unmentioned priests, who, with their bishops, had not yet been even created.

§ 72. RESPONSIBILITY TO OTHERS.—In fact, the whole is a connected discourse, whose purpose was to put down self-seeking, and to arouse in its place a regard for and constant effort in behalf of others. It originated in a customary struggle among the disciples to be "the greatest in the kingdom of heaven"—that is, really, in that *earthly* kingdom which the disciples were supposing to be at hand. And to infuse into them an opposite spirit, Jesus opens with an object lesson of a little child, whose humility they must copy, and were not even to one of these to give offence, under a penalty worse than that of being drowned with a millstone about the neck in the depth of the sea. In similar strong language He proceeds to point out still further the dangerous responsibility incurred by

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one, who asserts anything said by our LORD to the apostles, (independently of their exclusive creation and special mission as apostles, the which of course would pertain only to apostles, and to no others), denotes an exclusive ministerial function to be shared by them only with a subsequently created ministry. In general, or where not expressly confined to apostles, whatever is said to them is said to all.

<sup>1</sup> Acts 1: 15, 21. John 6: 66. Luke 10: 1.

the man who would lord it over and bind offences upon his fellows; telling him that it is better to go halting into a higher and yet higher life, than with his offending members intact to have to be purged of his unsacrificing spirit in the unceasing fires of the Gehenna of God's wrath; in this referring to the flames and smoke then rising as from a furnace in the valley of that name, by means of which the city Jerusalem was continually being purged of its filth, which was cast therein. Therefore, He says, despise not any one of the little ones of God; but take heed to them, like as the Son of man was then come to save that which was lost; assuring us—what so many will not believe even from His lips—that it is not our Heavenly Father's will that one little one should perish. And He illustrates the self-sacrificing urgency required of us in behalf of the perishing, by the parable of the eager search in the mountains for the sheep that was lost,—a search which involved the encountering of all manner of obstacles and hardships,—rather than to be content to enjoy rest and peace by staying at home with those who go not astray. He then introduces the passage which we have been considering, carrying our responsibility for the spiritual welfare of others to the extreme case where the perishing brother's offences are directly against ourselves.

§ 73. “BINDING AND LOOSING” IMPOSED UPON ALL.—And what tremendous emphasis the LORD of all, who gives Himself as an example to, and who sacrificed Himself for all, puts upon what we thus do for others! “Verily I say unto you, What things soever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and what things soever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” No wonder when such responsibility to others is so

solemnly assured to be ours, and such a climax of repeated effort enjoined,—alone, one or two more, the congregation,—that the question is asked by St. Peter in amazement as to how many times a man is under obligation to renew these varied efforts. And how consistent the answer! “I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven.” In other words, there is to be no end of effort, as often as good sense tells of hope, and that we do not harden. But now, observe, along with this perseverance, and this responsibility in the matter of binding and loosing imposed by the LORD Jesus upon us all, the abrupt change of address from the singular to the plural, because of the application of His words to the efforts of more than one, or to combined efforts. He no longer uses *thou*, and *thy*, and *thee*, as before; but, *ye*, or *you*; and immediately thereupon proceeds to tell of the power and influence of *numbers*. For Jesus had just said, “Tell it unto the *congregation*”; and, “If he will not hear the *congregation*.” And Jesus meant always what He said. And so, changing to the plural, as this final appeal to the congregation made proper, as did also the universal application to clergy and laity alike, expressly including the apostles and others present, or to combinations of effort on the part of men for all time, His language is, “What things soever *ye* shall bind”; and, “What things soever *ye* shall loose.” And we further hear, “If *two* of you shall *agree* as to what *they* shall ask, it shall be done for *them*”; and how *two* or *three*, *gathered together*, shall receive *their* behests. It belongs exclusively to ecclesiasticism, in the face of all this, out of a single man to make what our LORD has expressly designated as “the congregation”; and such fatuity let us suffer the devotees of priestly absolu-

tion and of ecclesiasticism exclusively to make their own. But nevertheless, because Jesus meant “the congregation,” therefore it was that He said it, and that He did not say, “the representative of the congregation,” or, “a priest.” And because He so said, He at once changed from the singular to the plural form of address, and thereafter went on to talk about the importance of numbers when gathered together for good. From every point of view this sorry attempt of ecclesiasticism to exalt the priest, whom Jesus had not once mentioned, becomes manifest as made with reckless disregard of the facts of the case; whereas, in truth, in many ways, we are carefully guarded from having our eyes shut to the awful responsibility for others which rests upon us all.

§ 74. “BINDING AND LOOSING” AN INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY.—And with the same care it is further pointed out that the measure of that responsibility is not merely in what we do. For as there is a time for all things, so there is a time when we should cease to do. For after trying every way to save a perishing brother which is open to trial,—the extremely secret, that which is partly secret, and at last that which is public,—and all in vain, what more can be done? If the climax of effort has been fully reached, and the “seventy times seven” efforts exhausted, to continue the process would only vex, harass, and *harden*. And there is no other plan to be tried. To keep doing the same things, which have proved themselves vain, would be simply throwing pearls before swine. It is a case where “Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone.”<sup>1</sup> This is the sound policy of common sense. To tease

<sup>1</sup> Hos. 4: 17.



the erring brother with useless effort, would make thee, and also the one or two more, and the congregation as well, responsible for the hardening caused thereby. Treat him, therefore, says the wise Master, as if he were no longer of the congregation. Leave him to his own reflections. "Let him be to thee as the Gentile (or outsider) and the publican"; or as the infidel, or the indifferent, or the wilful, selfish injurer of God's people, or the ordinary, perverse sinner. That is, conduct thyself toward him just as thou dost to those who are unbelievers, or are utterly regardless of duty.<sup>1</sup> But

<sup>1</sup> As there were no Christian congregations at the time when our LORD was speaking, the immediate reference, as mentioned in the text, was to the particular Jewish synagogue to which one was attached. The unfortunate translations, "Tell it unto the church," and, "If he will not hear the church," have given rise to much abuse of God's holy word on the part of those who are either not attentive scholars, or are positively dishonest. As before stated, this is the second occasion in all Greek literature when the word translated "church" in this passage was ever so rendered; the first occasion being that of Matt. 16: 18 (the second chapter back). The normal and, until these texts were improperly translated, the invariable meaning of the Greek word, as constantly used by author after author, was simply a *congregation, assembly, gathering, or body* of people for whatever purpose they might be brought together; as in Acts 19: 32, 39, 41. And here the immediate reference is as before stated. As in the case of our modern phrase "going to *meeting*," the Greek word also acquired among Christians the additional signification of "church" from habitual application by them to their several religious *gatherings after* these had become a custom, or not until after the descent of the Holy Ghost. But our LORD's idea on the two occasions of the use of the word in St. Matthew's Gospel was simply "the congregation." After private and semi-private means have failed, we are to resort to public. "Tell it out openly in *meeting*"—"Tell it to the *congregation*";—that is, to the particular *gathering, or assembly, or synagogue*, where both thyself and the erring brother are accustomed to meet together. The climax is obvious: First, alone; then, "one or two more"; and finally, "the congregation." The application of the passage in our day is of course to bring to one's



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mark thee: If thou hadst succeeded, thy success in *persuading* thy brother to the right would have been ratified most gladly of Heaven; and there also now thy failure is ratified. “Verily,” is the strong affirmation, “Verily whatsoever ye here bind is there bound; and whatsoever ye here loose is there loosed.” For such is the mutual, inevitable responsibility for one another impending over us all; and thus insistent is the will of the consistent God upon only persuasive measures being used by Him or us. If there be then an unto-ward result, it must needs be followed by ratification—never, *never* by *coercive* interposition from Heaven! Do we realise the awful, utter unpardonableness of the sin against the Holy Ghost, and how nearly and immediately it concerns ourselves? How well, indeed, St. Peter understood the universal, personal application of the words of Jesus! That is to say, how well those words were understood by the very one of the twelve to whom such words had been specially addressed but shortly before; or upon that most appropriate occasion when it was indicated by the gift of the keys of the kingdom of heaven, that to him should belong the honour of opening up the great spiritual activities of the Christian Church; or that he should become the

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aid at last, if possible, in behalf of an offending brother, all the congregation to which one is attached. It will therefore be plainly seen, that there is no reference whatever to the Church at large, and no authority given it by the passage in matters of doctrine. When accordingly men would foist into the passage what is so utterly foreign thereto, it must be through lack of comprehension of what the passage is about, or from dishonesty, or carelessness, or blind partisanship. But herein, as usual, ecclesiasticism employs itself in the destruction, first, of individual responsibility with its holy sovereignty, and next, of the integrity and super-natural consistency of the Christian scheme.

first preacher of the Gospel to men.<sup>1</sup> But do we then also realise, as St. Peter did, our own individual responsibility in the matter of binding and loosing, and that to throw it all upon priests would be verily a part of the Unpardonable Sin, especially as we all have been gifted with the guiding Spirit?

§ 75. CONSISTENCY OF BIBLE ON INDIVIDUAL SOVEREIGNTY.—And do we realise, moreover, in these constantly varied modes of statement respecting individual sovereignty and the unpardonableness of its abuse, how supernaturally consistent the Bible is throughout? How profound, and reasonable, and conformable to our highest ideas of God, is the above passage of St. Matthew the publican! and yet how little has it been understood by the wisest of men; and how much abused! (*a*) Of the same supernatural character, we have seen, are the deep and diversified utterances on these subjects of the unlettered, unpretentious fisherman St. John; and that, too, amid apparent contradictions; as will presently be illustrated. In particular, in what he says also, we may not escape the conclusion, that every one is made his brother's keeper; and that the briefer words of his Gospel as to binding and loosing have as enlarged a meaning as these have in the Gospel of St. Matthew; although, in the former case, really spoken only to the representative apostles.<sup>2</sup> The solemn admonitions of St. Matthew's eighteenth chapter consistently close with the parable, brought

<sup>1</sup> The gift, however, was more likely to Peter as representing the common responsibility.

<sup>2</sup> And therefore not distinctively to bishops or priests. As to the general application of St. John's words, see 1 John 5: 15, 16, and also the next section.

out by St. Peter's question, of the unforgiving creditor, wherein is set forth the peril to oneself, or not merely to a perishing brother, of neglecting his welfare. And observe in this consistent ending, that in the parable the only effective *absolution* cannot possibly be from a *priest* as such, but only from him who has been offended. It is the creditor who must bind or loose his debtor; and who therefore suffers the penalty for binding instead of loosing. In short, our LORD throughout inculcates a responsibility from which none can escape, and which is neither to be *exclusively* assumed by nor shifted upon ecclesiastical officials. But to think that these should venture to claim an increased share, nay, the whole of so alarming a burden, and that they should not rather prefer to make the world alive to its common pressure! Alas, they do but enlarge their own responsibility, without diminishing one whit that of the laity. Of what value, pray, is absolution, which does not absolve? And mark in another point of view the harmony of our LORD's concluding words with what went before. For at the beginning of the discourse, the attention had been directed to the danger of binding offences upon others. "Woe unto the world because of offences! . . . but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!" He thus pointed out at the start, that in the binding both the bound and the binder would suffer. And, we remember, He went on to declare how terrible would be the judgment of the binder in particular in the Gehenna of God's wrath. And now, at the close of the discourse, comes a like terrible warning for him who refuses to loose his fellows when bound. The judgment upon him also would be, to be delivered to the tormentors for his due purgation; and accordingly, not for ever. That would

not be true justice, to inflict infinite punishment for finite sin; but until he shall have got rid of every whit of his Unpardonable Sin, and shall have learned to do his whole duty to God. Verily, it is the judgment upon us all.

§ 76. JOHN'S EPISTLES AND THE UNPARDONABLE SIN.—With the repeated and diversified allusions to the Unpardonable Sin in St. John's Gospel, as heretofore exemplified, it is quite natural that he should have something to say about so important a matter also in his general epistle. And it is a little noticeable with what peculiar simplicity he seems therein to speak; as if he were aware that what he said was in seeming contradiction to his previous statements; yet making no attempt at explanation or reconciliation. His manner almost tempts the inquiry as to whether the apostle was not writing under the governing influence of consistent inspiration without himself having lucid ideas in regard to that of which he wrote; just as did the elder prophets when the Spirit through them "testified beforehand the sufferings in relation to Christ, and the glories subsequent thereto."<sup>1</sup> Or the better idea may be, that the apostle himself fully understood the matter, but that it is the will of the guiding Spirit to stimulate on the part of the reader the character-forming exercise of care and diligence and industry in comparing scripture with scripture under a weighty sense of individual responsibility, especially in a case where, confessedly, the eyes of "the wise and prudent" are blinded. Or it may be merely the crudity of the sacred writer's style. At all events, whatever the reason or reasons, thus he writes: "If one see his

<sup>1</sup> 1 Pet. 1: 10-12.

brother sinning a sin not unto Death (*i. e.*, the *act* of sin, which was Christ's burden for us, as distinguished from the sinful *state*<sup>1</sup>), he shall ask for, and shall tender to him Life, for them that sin not unto Death.<sup>2</sup> There is a Sin unto Death:<sup>3</sup> I do not say that he (who intercedes for another) shall pray for this (unpardonable sin). All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto Death (and which, therefore, may be forgiven). We know (the apostle proceeds, with supreme confidence in the new, holy, regenerated Life within us all) that every one that has been begotten of God sinneth not; but he that has been begotten of God keepeth himself, and that<sup>4</sup> evil one (or, *thing*, to wit, Sin, or Death) toucheth him not. We know that we are of God (in our new man), and the whole world (including therefore ourselves, or the old man within us all) lieth prostrate in that evil one; being guilty of the Unpardonable Sin, or the sin unto Death (1 John 5: 16-19).

§ 77. JOHN'S TEACHING ON SIN, DEATH, AND DELIVERANCE.—Thus then, most consistently, throughout his writings, St. John, the humble fisherman, repre-

<sup>1</sup> Let us remember that the sinful act, when of the past, or repented of, could be atoned for without interfering with the freedom of the will; but not so the state of sin, which is of the present.

<sup>2</sup> The idea seems to be both to pray for and plead with the offending brother, as in Matt. 18. The Greek verb normally means "give," but sometimes "tender" or "offer," which is more appropriate here.

<sup>3</sup> Even the corruption of the heart, or "the old man" predestined unto Death, which old man must be consumed in the fires of the Second Death, and to that end is the Spirit's special care, who vouchsafes to him no pardon. For "the old man" there is no tender of Life.

<sup>4</sup> Lit. "the (*i. e.*, *that*) evil," referring to Death, just before mentioned, or Sin, or the evil one. See § 124 (b) ¶4.



sents all unrighteousness to be sin,<sup>1</sup> and all who sin to be children of the devil, and under the judgment of Death; but that "the Blood of Jesus Christ" the Righteous "cleanseth us from all sin," begetting in us a new, holy Life, wherein we become the children of God; and that, receiving this Life, we have passed from the Death of Sin into the Life of Righteousness,<sup>2</sup> and are untouched by the mortal stain of the sins of "the old man";<sup>3</sup> which old man, however, for our sovereignty's sake, is still suffered to remain within us and prolong our childhood to the devil; but is, nevertheless, under the law of Sin and Death, awaiting at our hands the due execution of the law.<sup>4</sup> Seeing then, that in respect of this sinful old man we remain children of the devil, the apostle takes care to warn us in various ways that the Sin of this existence is unpardonable, and of its inevitable and unceasing Judgment. And so he tells us, that there is still within us a Sin which is unto Death,—a Death which is designated in his book of the Revelation from its prolonged nature as another sort of Death, or as the Second Death.<sup>5</sup> From this Death, he teaches, that each individual can only be delivered by the Final Destruction of "the old man" within him; for that while the old man continues to live, there can be no cessation of the æonic fires of the ever-just God. He speaks accordingly of the Sin unto Death as a Sin for which he will not say that we should even pray; that is, for its forgiveness,

<sup>1</sup> 1 John 5: 17; 1: 7.

<sup>2</sup> John 5: 24. 1 John 2: 8-11, 17, 29; 3: 14. See 1 Pet. 2: 24. Rom. 5: 12; 6: 2, 11; 7: 6. 1 Cor. 7: 31. 2 Cor. 5: 17.

<sup>3</sup> John 8: 34-36. See Rom. 8: 2; § 124 (b).

<sup>4</sup> 1 John 2: 17. 1 Cor. 15: 50-54. 2 Cor. 5: 4.

<sup>5</sup> Rev. 2: 11; 20: 6, 14; 21: 8. And see Jude 5, 12. 2 Pet. 2: 19-22. Luke 9: 60, etc.



or to avert its due judgment. Rather, the proper prayer is for its extermination, just as our LORD has taught—"Deliver us from the evil one." In other words, the sinful heart throughout its existence is unpardonable, and, in view of man's sovereignty, will continue to call for the Second sort of Death even that prolonged Death from which we are now suffering, or for the Judgment according to deeds, both to satisfy the justice of GOD, and to stimulate the individual to the glorious task set before each one of becoming altogether the child of GOD. Hence, until this task is completed, we perpetuate our childhood to the devil, and continue in that æonic fire prepared for the devil and his angels. From life to life, therefore,—that is, from æon to æon,—to the evil one the Holy Spirit is no comforter, but a consuming fire; a fire so exactly proportioned to the deeds of each person, that it never becomes coercive; burning the more fiercely wherever the independence of the will is not easily constrained or overcome; or for the stubborn, the mocking, the idle, and the indifferent; and also where a strong faith, with like freedom of will, may welcome, and take comfort in, and be developed by its consuming power; neither class receiving a greater burden than it is able to bear.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, throughout all history, it is the best and the worst who suffer most; therein illustrating most forcibly the merciful purpose and remedial character of all suffering, or, to use our Saviour's phraseology, of "all judgment,"<sup>2</sup> and how utterly foreign GOD's vengeance is to that of men, and with

<sup>1</sup> John 5: 22-30; 14: 15-18, 26, 27; 16: 7-11, 20-22. See Ps. 125:3. 1 Cor. 10: 12, 13. 2 Pet. 2: 9, 10. Jer. 29: 11. Matt. 20: 22. Ec. 7: 15-20.

<sup>2</sup> John 5: 22, 23.

what care He refrains from disturbing His gift of sovereignty to them. And conformably to this method of divine justice, in St. John's writings there is comfort only for men when, and according as, they keep advancing unto perfection. Of these he says: "We have boldness toward GOD; and whatsoever we ask we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do the things that are pleasing in His sight." Thus the apostle would keep us in mind, that only as our love is made perfect are we entitled to have boldness, and to cast out all fear, seeing that sufferings in this world are a necessary part of our day of judgment.<sup>1</sup>

§ 78. THE ETERNAL HARMONY OF SPIRITUAL TRUTH.—If the several statements of St. John's First Epistle were taken separately, or out of their spiritual relations to each other, how exceedingly contradictory they would appear!<sup>2</sup> But when compared with the eternal

<sup>1</sup> 1 John 3: 21, 22; 4: 17, 18.

<sup>2</sup> Thus: All men are sinners, and every sinner a child of the devil.—We are children of God, and the child of God cannot sin.—The blood of the Righteous One cleanseth from all sin.—There is a sin unto Death.—etc. In view of the atonement for acts of sin, abolishing the Death which impended over all men, while Sinfulness still remains unpardonable, we can readily understand St. John when he speaks of sins which are not unto Death, and again of the one Sin unto Death. But since the scriptures have plainly declared the wages of all sin to be Death, and, in respect of that penalty, he that offends in one point to be in the same condition as if he were guilty of all (Jas. 1: 15; 2: 9-11), but because of redemption, that there is now but *one* Sin unto Death, to wit, Sinfulness, the artificial distinction made by ecclesiasticism between mortal and venial sins is without scriptural authority, even as it is wholly unreasonable. In the eye of the holy God sin is intolerable, and all sin is mortal sin, whether little or great—as St. James puts it, whether only respect of persons, or adultery, or murder. See § 124 (b).

harmonies of spiritual truth, how aptly do they combine and fit in therewith! It is, among other things, the supernatural concord of the many sacred writers, even while expressing themselves in such varied and complicated ways that they often seem to contradict both themselves and one another, which demonstrates how "God hath chosen the weak things of the world" to be His spokesmen thereto; or in order to give us proof that their profound words of mutual harmony, so far above those of the wise of the earth, which incessantly contradict one another, are so much the more plainly above their own natural measure; thus leaving men without excuse for refusing to believe in the genuineness of His holy truth.<sup>1</sup> Our examination has shown that in the sacred writings there is always the one system; to wit, Universal Sin and Death, with Universal Redemption from Death and Justification unto Life through the Righteousness of the Christ; the free Gift of the Spirit unto all men because of the same Righteousness; the great fact, therefore, that we *are born of Christ and the Spirit, and are the sons of God*; even the like insistence that we have full proof of the fact in the good that is in every one; and the same asseverations that the scheme of Grace was predesigned of God from before the foundation of the world, or, as St. John commences his epistle, was "that which

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. I: 26-31. This proof becomes all the stronger the more we find errors in the sacred writers respecting mere earthly things, about which they were not inspired, but left to manifest their own natural weakness. The same remark applies to the grossness of some of the writers of very ancient times. The revealed spiritual truth is all right, let the individual writer display the weakness of his own natural character as he will. And the more he makes the display, the more he demonstrates his supernatural position in respect of the deep things of God, which were so far beyond his natural powers or condition.

was from the beginning." And moreover, notwithstanding all these revelations, joyously made, of the great Gifts of Grace, we have similar formidable declarations in the several epistles and gospels, and in the Apocalypse and the Acts, and even in the Old Testament, concerning the Unpardonable Sin; the which, therefore (even as St. John writes), *still calls for a Death*, although a Second sort of Death, in substitution for the First from which we have been delivered; that is to say, for a prolonged *living* woe, ending in a *final* Destruction of the evil in each man; or, as eternal justice and our sovereignty conjointly demand, for a continual Judgment according to the deeds which evidence our state; a Judgment, accordingly, which becomes correlated with the condition of the individual, and which, because inevitable upon unpardonable sin, will be certainly continued so long as the sufferer shall be guilty of that æonic sin, or until his Salvation from Sinfulness becomes certainly effected. And lastly, the sacred teachers of Christianity all alike show also that, after the latter Salvation is gained, then the Salvation from Woe, or the third in logical order, immediately ensues; yea, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump";<sup>1</sup> the trump of the great battle between the old man and the new, which sounds forth the latter's victory. "For the LORD will not cast off for ever. For though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies. For He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men."<sup>2</sup>

"For the creation hath been subjected to vanity (imprisoned in the travails of nature), not of its own will, but

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. 15:52. Rev. 2:11.

<sup>2</sup> Lam. 3:31-33.

through (the power of) the One who hath subjected,—in hope;<sup>1</sup> because the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of GOD. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now."<sup>2</sup>

In all these multiplied revelations, therefore, when rightly interpreted, with what supernatural concord do the inspired writers confirm one another! And how quickly do they bristle with irreconcilable contradictions, the moment the false interpreter essays to do his wrestling!

§ 79. CHRIST'S DEPARTURE AND ADVENT OF HOLY SPIRIT.—Moreover, along with all this wonderful exhibition of superhuman coherency in the general system of the sacred writings, there are to be found scattered about therein, in a desultory, disconnected, and seemingly haphazard manner, many complicating details, having, however, a vital connection with the integrity of the system, and absolutely necessary to its completeness, and at the same time throwing new revealing light thereupon; and yet, hidden away, just as GOD in the natural world hides away the beautiful jewels, to stimulate the industry and enterprise of men. Such a detail was the declaration of our LORD that with His Body of Sacrifice<sup>3</sup> He must ascend to Heaven; thus removing utterly from earth all atoning Flesh and Blood, in order that the Holy Spirit may come;

<sup>1</sup> And the hope of GOD has no end but in fruition.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. 8: 20-22.

<sup>3</sup> Now transfigured, and made altogether spiritual. Phil. 3: 20, 21. 1 Cor. 15: 43, 48, 49. Col. 3: 4. 1 John 3: 2. Rom. 8: 29. 2 Cor. 3: 18. Rev. 1: 13-18.



the Person of the Trinity who brings no pardon in His sanctifying work, but can only be propitiated by the perfect deeds of men.<sup>1</sup> How does such an incidental utterance as this, which so perfectly accords with the general system, and which no human, unassisted brain would have been apt to incorporate therein, or see the essential character thereof,—nay, of which it hardly sees the special meaning when brought into the system by the hand of inspiration,—possess a value in confirmation of that inspiration from its very unobtrusiveness! And yet, on careful attention, we find it to be introduced with marked emphasis as an indispensable part of the Gospel of Grace.

“Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter (or, Helper—Greek, *Paraclete*) will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you. And when He is come, He will convict the world in respect of sin, and in respect of righteousness, and in respect of judgment.”<sup>2</sup>

And let us particularly note, in connection with the necessity of the Divine Speaker’s departure from the earth, how He proceeds to declare, among the reasons for what the Holy Spirit will do in consequence of that departure, why it is that He will convict the world in respect of righteousness. The reasons are (verse 10), “Because I go to the Father, and ye see me no more.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> John 16: 5-14.

<sup>2</sup> John 16: 7, 8. Verse 11 tells us, that the judgment, instead of being postponed, is now taking place; just as previously declared by our LORD in 3: 18 and 12: 31.

<sup>3</sup> St. Paul, we remember, repeats the declaration of the Master: “Yea, though we have known Christ *as Flesh*, yet now we know (Him so) no more.” Or, avoiding the “Him so” (not in the original), the translation would be, “And though we have known,



That is to say, in taking from the world His own Righteousness, and also His Body of Sacrifice, after these shall have completed their proper work, the sinner in respect of his Sinfulness will not have them for a defence as against the Second Death. On the contrary, he will be fully convicted of his unrighteousness by the unpardoning Spirit, and will not see in Jesus a Substitute to avert the Spirit's judgment. Nay, for the very purpose<sup>1</sup> of taking from the world, thus convicted, any visible dependence upon His Righteousness and Sacrifice, Jesus in His Humanity goes to the Father, who had sent His Son to give Life to the world, but not any immunity in its Sinfulness; and so, as it is said, the world sees Him no more. Still, though the sinner be thus left to his righteous judgment, he is assured, nevertheless, of its merciful intent; for he is told, that notwithstanding Jesus, as Man, goes away, He verily goes to the common Father of all. And He goes, it is expressly said, in order that in due time He may return to receive to Himself those who at His Coming shall be ready. And the sinner is further assured that if, until he too is ready, he is convicted in respect of judgment, it is "the prince of this world," or "the old man" within him, who "is judged." And so, the parting words of Jesus are: "A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father."<sup>2</sup>

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yet now we know Christ *as Flesh* no more." 2 Cor. 5: 16. See John 17: 11; 14: 19.

<sup>1</sup> Among others.

<sup>2</sup> John 16: 16. And see, generally, the 14th to the 17th chapters inclusive. The r. v. omits in verse 16 "because I go to the Father." The clause is, however, in MSS. A., etc., and is retained by Griesbach, and is given in verses 10, 17, and 28, and as a cause of rejoicing to us in 14: 28. The use in the Greek of two verbs,

§ 80. THE INCARNATION COMPLETED BY ASCENSION. —Thus do our LORD's statements as to the necessity and purpose of His departure in the Body, or, to speak somewhat more fully, of His departure *in His Humanity*, from the earth, give additional reasons for the necessity of His ascension.<sup>1</sup> And those statements at the same time are a rebuke to all who, virtually denying that He has thus departed from the earth and ascended to heaven, persistently affirm, contrary to the statements, that He is continually present with us here on earth *in the Body* in the Holy Eucharist!<sup>2</sup> And this they do in the face of the careful declaration, first of our LORD, that the bread and wine of the Holy Supper are "for a *memento*" of Him, or, as is the necessary implication, are not Himself in Person; and next of His apostle, in further explanation, that they are intended to "*proclaim* (as is the literal translation) the LORD's Death till He come."<sup>3</sup> Surely, if they simply proclaim what He has done, or, again, are "a *memento*" of Him, they cannot be Himself, but are strictly the "*memento*"; and if the proclamation is to continue as often as they take the sacrament "till He come" finally, He cannot already be there. In short, it is a purely representative act that we are commanded to perform, in entire consistency with

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one for the earthly and the other for the heavenly vision, is noteworthy. It occurs also repeatedly, though not in other passages with the same careful distinction. See them distinguished in the r. v. as *behold* and *see*.

<sup>1</sup> Other reasons being, that in heaven He might appear in the presence of God for us, and be our Intercessor at the right hand of power. Heb. 9: 24; 7: 25. Rom. 8: 34.

<sup>2</sup> Our LORD is indeed ever present with us, but no more in Flesh. 2 Cor. 5: 16.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. 11: 24-26.

our LORD's departure from the earth and ascension into heaven. By a tender, grateful ceremony in memory of what the departed Jesus has done for us, He would touch our hearts, and stir us up also to deeds of sacrifice and love; and He would have us keep up this memorial celebration all the while that He is sitting at the right hand of GOD, awaiting<sup>1</sup> the time when each one of us in his due order shall become thoroughly subject to His will; and then at last, or to the perfected individual, and not before, *He will come*. In the fact of the ascension, therefore, there is an obvious demonstration of the idolatry of those who, weakly yielding to the normal tendencies of the flesh, or of our grosser natures, and ever demanding for their worship objects of sense, would, pantheist-like, and Proteus-like, confound matter—even the bread and wine of which we ourselves are the manufacturers, and whose application to sacred uses is also from time to time the act of human hands—with the Flesh and Blood of Jesus, whose natural Body has long since been changed into the spiritual, and is, we are solemnly assured, not from henceforth a dweller in an earthly temple made with hands,<sup>2</sup> but awaits us, sitting at the right hand of GOD in glory. Whether, verily, men choose to recognise the fact or not, the

<sup>1</sup> *Awaiting* or *waiting* is the proper translation of the Greek word used in Heb. 10: 13. The word implies in the passage a waiting for that which is to be done by another from whom the waiter expects to receive. Jesus waits from henceforth, sitting at the right hand of God, "till His enemies be made His footstool"; or unreservedly obedient to His will. But if, in His Manhood, He waits *there*, how can that Manhood possibly be *here*? See how inconsistent, in text after text the Bible would be made, if the unrevealed assumptions of ecclesiasticism are to govern.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. 9: 24.

incomprehensible incarnation of the Son of God is abundantly revealed to us as having fully accomplished its object upon earth; and that, accordingly, it no longer there sojourns; nor any more partakes of the natural; and that "though we have known Christ as flesh, yet now we know (Him so) no more."<sup>1</sup> The omnipresent Son of God, indeed, will be with every one of His redeemed alway to the end; but His glorified Humanity is in heaven, completing for us the great purposes of the incarnation.

§ 81. ISOLATED DETAILS SHOW SUPERNATURAL CONSISTENCY.—It illustrates the special importance of the apparently isolated jewels of truth which have been scattered here and there in the book of inspiration, and are evidently intended to emphasise and call forth our more diligent and painstaking study of the word of God, and which often show the folly of the would-be authority of men, that even by such seemingly incidental details, when brought into comparison and juxtaposition, and in their due relations with kindred revelations, we not only gain a fuller and more precise apprehension of the intent and meaning of revealed truth, but also rid our minds of what have seemed to be troublesome contradictions therein, and rid the Christian system at the same time of the absurdities and grossness which ecclesiasticism has foisted thereupon. In further illustration, we may perhaps learn to correct our theories respecting the all-important Second Coming of the Son of man, by bringing together a few of the details upon that subject which are widely scattered in the sacred book, and

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. 5: 16. Or, "though we have known, yet now we know Christ as flesh no more."

are so isolated, that we have not fully realised their mutually illuminating power. Indeed, it is only by carefully, and industriously, and earnestly "comparing spiritual things with spiritual,"<sup>1</sup> as we are bidden to do, that we may divest ourselves of long-established, gangrenous prejudices, and discover at length what is really the truth, beneath the mass of rubbish and overlying, rank vegetation which have insensibly accumulated thereupon, according to the law of the natural world, during the lapse of the ages. For by doing this, at all events, without regard to the contrary assumptions which have emanated from the so-called authority of men, we are taught as follows:

§ 82. THE DAY OF JUDGMENT.—That, unlike the old heavens and earth, which emblematically brought Death upon the world in the flood, we have the present course of nature, or "the heavens and the earth which are now," kept in store, or "treasured up, for fire (the fire of the judgment according to deeds), being kept for a day of judgment and of destruction of the ungodly men";<sup>2</sup> and that this is done by the God of untiring patience, with whom a thousand years are as one day, because He "is longsuffering to us-ward,<sup>3</sup> not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance"; and that accordingly each individual who is not yet brought to perfect repentance, or every man upon earth, should "account the longsuffering of our LORD (to be ensuring his) salvation"; and with

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. 2: 13.

<sup>2</sup> The translation is strictly literal, and according to the strict sense of the Greek preposition when thus used with words of time.

<sup>3</sup> So a. v.; but *you-ward*, r. v., on the better MS. authority. An improvement would be "longsuffering of you."



fear and trembling should be "looking for and speeding the coming of the day of GOD" in victory, when the natural shall dissolve and melt away from the glorified soul, with all the terrible judgments of which it is the instrument.<sup>1</sup> Instead therefore of any deferring to the future of the day of judgment by the *eternal* Judge, rather, during all the thousands of years of the continuance of the natural world, the true idea is, "The LORD is at hand,"<sup>2</sup> and likewise, of course, "the day of the LORD";<sup>3</sup> and in striking language we hear, "For He cometh, He cometh (the present tense being emphatically repeated), to judge the earth";<sup>4</sup> and that He is with us "all days" to the end.<sup>5</sup> And in view of this continual judgment it is said, that the nations should be glad and sing for joy; because He shall "judge the peoples with equity, and lead onward the nations upon earth."<sup>6</sup> Yea, He Himself has said, "Now is the judgment of this world"; and has declared the unbeliever to be already receiving judgment for his deeds;<sup>7</sup> and that every idle word shall have its day of judgment.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, we are cautioned, that while we "are saying, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh"; or, that "the day of the LORD so cometh as a thief in the night"; the LORD being revealed from heaven, as in clouds and darkness, in these sudden and repeated judgments which darken our life;<sup>9</sup> for in them the Son of man cometh at

<sup>1</sup> 2 Pet. 3: 5-15. See Hos. 13: 13.

<sup>2</sup> Phil. 4: 5.

<sup>3</sup> Zeph. 1: 7.

<sup>4</sup> Ps. 96: 13.

<sup>5</sup> Matt. 28: 20.

<sup>6</sup> Ps. 67: 4. See r. v. and margin. And see Ps. 96: 11.

<sup>7</sup> John 12: 31; 3: 18.

<sup>8</sup> Matt. 12: 36. Lit. "a day of judgment"—*i. e., its own day, or special judgment.*

<sup>9</sup> 1 Th. 5: 1-11. 2 Th. 1: 4-10. There are in fact three comings of Christ which are continually referred to in the scriptures. 1. The



an hour when we think not;<sup>1</sup> and that He so cometh, because we, in truth, like the evil servant, say in our hearts, The LORD delayeth His coming;<sup>2</sup> yea, that, while we are thus saying, the day of a visitation of the LORD is repeatedly coming as a snare upon "*all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth*"; and that we must learn to watch therefore, and pray always, that we may be accounted worthy to escape the judgments that come upon others, "and to stand before the Son of man;"<sup>3</sup> that no generation passes away without the visitations of the LORD thereupon; and that even the great Judge may not fix arbitrarily the day and hour of His visitations,<sup>4</sup> because of Himself He can do nothing; but in deference to His own unalterable

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coming to save the world. 2. The day of continual visitation, or long day of judgment. 3. The coming to receive the perfected soul, or the final, victorious coming at the end of the long, "last day." I give below some of the innumerable examples of 2; although some of them seem rather, or also, of 1 and 3, either or both. Thus: Is. 2: 12; 10: 3; 13: 6, 9, 13; 22: 5; 34: 8; 61: 2; 63: 4; 65: 2, 5. Jer. 12: 1, 3; 16: 19; 17: 16-18; 25: 16-18, 29-38; 30: 7-24; 46: 10, 21; 50: 27-32. Lam. 1: 12, 13, 21; 2: 1, 21, 22; 3: 3. Ezek. 7: 7-12, 19, 27; 13: 5; 30: 2, 3, 8, 9, 18, 19; 34: 12; 39: 8, 11, 13. Joel 1: 15; 2: 1, 2, 11, 31; 3: 14, 18. Amos 3: 14; 5: 18-24. Obad. 15. Mic. 7: 4. Nahum 1: 2-9; 2: 3. Hab. 3: 16. Zeph. 1: 7, 14-18; 2: 2, 3; 3: 8, 17. Zech. 14: 1, 6-9. Mal. 3: 1, 2; 4: 1, 3, 5. Matt. 24 and 25 chaps. Mk. 13 ch. Luke 12 ch.; 17: 20-37; 21: 5-36. John 11: 23-27; 12: 48. Acts 2: 16-21; 17: 30, 31. Rom. 1: 18; 2: 2-12, 16; 8: 36; 10: 21; 13: 11-14; 1 Cor. 1: 8; 3: 13-15; 5: 5, 13; 10: 11; 15: 22-28. 2 Cor. 1: 14; 6: 2. Eph. 4: 30, lit. "*for a day of redemption,*" *i. e.*, of sanctification; 6: 10-18. Phil. 1: 6, 10; 2: 16. 1 Th. 5: 23, lit. "*during the coming.*" Heb. 10: 26-39; 12: 25-29. 1 Pet. 2: 12; 4: 5-7. 2 Pet. 2: 9, lit. "*to be corrected during a day of judgment*"; 3: 4-15; 1 John 4: 17. Jude 6, lit. "*for a judgment of a great day,*" 14-18. Rev. 6: 16, 17; 16: 14, 15, etc.

<sup>1</sup> Luke 12: 40. Matt. 24: 37-44.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. 24: 48. Luke 12: 45.

<sup>3</sup> Luke 21: 34-36.

<sup>4</sup> Matt. 24: 34-36. Mk. 13: 30-37. Luke 21: 32.

gift of free-will, as He hears, so must He judge;<sup>1</sup> that therefore, as pertains to eternal justice, the unbeliever is properly judged already;<sup>2</sup> yea, that the fire is now prepared for the devil and his angels;<sup>3</sup> and is kindled for them too; even for all imperfect souls, and right here upon this earth of ours;<sup>4</sup> that even because we have been gifted with Life and Immortality, the Holy Giver, who is no "minister of sin,"<sup>5</sup> sends no peace on earth, now that the peace of final Death has been taken away, but a sword;<sup>6</sup> that "His heart is stablished, and will not shrink, until He see His desire upon His enemies";<sup>7</sup> and that out of our prison of judgment, or our incarceration in some form or other of the natural, none of us shall be delivered until the very last mite has been paid; that is, until the last atom of Sinfulness has been removed;<sup>8</sup> that to some there will be few stripes, and to others many, according to the justice of the several cases;<sup>9</sup> although all shall be prisoners of hope;<sup>10</sup> that the prophecy, or teaching, of even Enoch of the antediluvian world is said to have been, "Behold, the LORD *is come*, with His holy myriads, to execute judgment upon all";<sup>11</sup> that the LORD Himself, in His last revelations to men, declares that the teaching must not be sealed,—that is, must be open to them to read and interpret for themselves,—to wit, that under all circumstances, men shall have their free option to be filthy or holy, unrighteous or righteous;

<sup>1</sup> John 5:30. Gen. 1:26-28. Deut. 30:19.

<sup>2</sup> John 3:18.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. 25:41.

<sup>4</sup> Luke 12:49.

<sup>5</sup> Gal. 2:17.

<sup>6</sup> Matt. 10:34.

<sup>7</sup> Psalter 112:8.

<sup>8</sup> Matt. 18:34. Luke 12:59.

<sup>9</sup> Luke 12:47, 48.

<sup>10</sup> Zech. 9:11, 12.

<sup>11</sup> Do the "holy myriads" include the countless things, animate and inanimate, of the natural world? Jude 14.

assuring them, however, that “the time is at hand,” even the time of their corresponding judgment; and that He thereupon tells us plainly, “And behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to render to each man according as is his work”; and that His very last message to us is, “Yea, I come quickly.”<sup>1</sup>

§ 83. “YEA, I COME QUICKLY.”—Furthermore, we are taught that we all shall see this continual coming in judgment. Even to the high priest and council who were delivering Him to be crucified Jesus said, “Henceforth ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.”<sup>2</sup> And this but a short time after He had declared, “Yet a little while, and the world *seeth me no more.*”<sup>3</sup> The explanation is, that from that time on they would see Him coming with the spiritual, not the carnal eye; and even so, *only in clouds*—in clouds, that is to say of course, not in mere natural vapour, but “in the clouds of *heaven.*” In these, indeed, we all behold Him; recognising Him in the wielding of the right hand of heavenly power. But no man, certainly, could bear the sight of the great Judge of all the earth in His full personal glory, or the awful majesty of His countenance when He comes in judgment upon the wicked. For “justice and judgment are the habitation of” His throne, or of His seat in heaven at the right hand of power;<sup>4</sup> while, hiding the Judge Himself from view, “clouds and darkness are round about Him.”<sup>5</sup> And in these lowering clouds, and in the gloom of this forbidding darkness, it is, that we all, as did thence-

<sup>1</sup> Rev. 22: 10-12, 20. And see 2: 5, 16, 23.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. 26: 64. Henceforth (r. v.), not hereafter (a. v.).

<sup>3</sup> John 14: 19. <sup>4</sup> Ps. 89: 14; 97: 2. <sup>5</sup> Ps. 97: 2, and *passim*.

forth in their day Caiaphas and the council, now also behold Him; or only in "the sign of the Son of man in heaven"; particularly when it is displayed in the awful exercise of His divine justice and judgment.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, for the very preservation of our GOD-given sovereignty moreover, that we may not be overawed into slavish subjection, there must needs be veiled from us, when under condemnation, the brightness of His dazzling, awe-inspiring presence, with His face plainly flaming with wrath because of our imperfections. Nay, even when He reveals His mercies and merciful designs to the children of men, it is instructively said, "I will *appear in the cloud* upon the mercy seat."<sup>2</sup> And thus He, who necessarily tells of spiritual things only in parables, is of greater necessity Himself a parable to us all. Whether therefore He appears in judgment or in mercy, "the Light shineth in the darkness";<sup>3</sup> and it shineth the more obscurely, of course, the greater the spiritual darkness.

§ 84. TERRORS OF SECOND ADVENT.—Since then the coming of the LORD is only visible in the signs thereof, we are still further distinctly taught as follows: That "The kingdom of GOD cometh not with observation"; but is within each individual soul;<sup>4</sup> for that the unchangeable LORD of all is leading His people, the great congregation built upon Him, through the wilderness of the world, as He led His typical congregation of old, "by day in a pillar of a cloud," "and by night in a pillar of fire."<sup>5</sup> As it is said, "He shall show judgment to the nations. He shall not strive, nor

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 24:29-41. Rev. 1:7, 13-18. Heb. 12:14. 1 John 3: 2.

<sup>2</sup> Lev. 16: 2.

<sup>3</sup> John 1: 5.

<sup>4</sup> Luke 17: 20, 21.

<sup>5</sup> Ex. 13: 21, 22.

cry; neither shall any man hear His voice in the streets.”<sup>1</sup> And consistently with what was said to the high priest and council, we are told, that “all the tribes of the earth”—“every eye”—including the very men who pierced Him, shall see His coming; but again, that, with all alike, the vision of Him shall be not in Person, but *in clouds*: wherein shall be seen, in fact, instead of the Person, merely “the sign of the Son of man”;<sup>2</sup> while the darkening of the sun, the turning of the moon into blood, and the falling of the stars, have their place in the formidable description of His Coming;<sup>3</sup> just as the old prophets in the same parabolic way had made them, in their prophetic descriptions, to accompany the downfall of Nineveh, and Babylon, and Egypt, and other ancient wicked peoples; and also to show forth the woes upon the children of Israel, and upon the whole earth.<sup>4</sup> Thus, in a variety of ways, earthly figures of the most imposing character are multiplied in the scriptures, to impress upon our minds the terrors of the Second Advent. Since we are not suffered to be confounded by a personal vision of the Son of man, the merciful Judge would have us realise as much as possible His present fearful Coming in judgment upon the earth. As usual, He speaks in parables, telling us therein, that from His *throne in heaven* the judgments of His great day are issuing

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 12:18, 19. Is. 42:1, 2.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. 24:30. Rev. 15:1. 2 Th. 1:4, 5. And see Gen. 9:8-17. Ex. 19:16-25. Dan. 7:13, 14. Nah. 1:2, 3.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. 24:29. Mk. 13:24-26. Luke 21:11, 25. Acts 2:19, 20. Heb. 12:26. Rev. 6:12, 13; 8:10, 11; 9:1; 21:23; 22:5.

<sup>4</sup> Job 5:14. Is. 8:20, 22; 13:9, 10; 24:21-23; 30:26; 59:9, 10; 60:1-3, 19, 20. Jer. 15:9. Ezek. 30:3; 32:7, 8. Joel 2:1-3, 10, 30, 31; 3:12-16. Amos 5:18-20; 8:9. Mic. 3:6. Nahum 1:1-8. Zeph. 1:14, 15. Hag. 2:6.



all the while. That is, we must not in our literalism be looking for His natural form, sitting on the clouds of earth, exhibiting the sign of a material cross before our carnal eyes. On the contrary, the world at large, "every eye," is now seeing both the Coming in clouds and also "the sign of the Son of man." And if we would know what "the sign" is, and very plainly too, let us not beguile ourselves with literal interpretations of solemn figures of speech. We shall find the reality nearer in the continual crosses of life. For, indeed, we are distinctly told what the reality is; namely, that all the persecutions and tribulations which we endure are "a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God"; and that this "manifest token," or *sign*, is exhibited "at the *revelation* of the LORD Jesus from heaven with the angels of His power in flaming fire,<sup>1</sup> rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that hearken not to the Gospel of our LORD Jesus Christ."<sup>2</sup> And it is also said, "And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having seven (the full or complete number) plagues, (which are) the last, for in them is made complete (or, *is ended*) the wrath of God."<sup>3</sup> In this "sign," or "manifest token," or, that is, in the judgments of heaven upon all imperfect souls, we all do of a verity see the Coming of the Son of man. Said the prophet, "Woe unto you that desire the day of the LORD! to what end is it for you? the day of the LORD is

<sup>1</sup> The angels or messengers of His power by which He takes vengeance are clearly the powers of nature in which we are now incarcerated, as fire, wind, disease, etc. See Heb. 1: 7.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Th. 1: 4-10.

<sup>3</sup> Rev. 15: 1. In them, that is, the wrath of God accomplishes its great undertaking. The Greek verb carries that idea. It is rendered in the a. v. "is filled up"; in the r. v. "is finished."



darkness, and not light. As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him;<sup>1</sup> or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him.”<sup>2</sup> And proclaimed another:

“The great day of the LORD *is near*, it is near, and hasteth greatly. . . . That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers. And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk *like blind men*, because they have sinned against the LORD.”<sup>3</sup>

§ 85. THE DAY OF THE LORD.—The old prophet tells us then, that sinners shall walk in the day of the LORD, when He comes speedily in judgment upon them, “like blind men.” And this is the common teaching of the Bible. How singular it is, when men are emphatically assured by our LORD, and also by St. Paul, that the word of inspiration must have spiritual, and not literal interpretation, in its diversified parables and figures of speech,<sup>4</sup> that they should persist in their carnal literalism. And yet, it is only too natural that carnal men should exhibit what is in them. But it is certainly remarkable that the exhibition

<sup>1</sup> Intimating no hope of escape from unpardonable Sinfulness, as well as the variety of the judgments upon men.

<sup>2</sup> Amos 5: 18, 19.

<sup>3</sup> Zeph. 1: 14-17.

<sup>4</sup> The very Gospel which contains the two “Excepts,” as they are called, whose literal interpretation has so divided Christians, is the one in which our LORD assures us, that it is the spirit which giveth Life; and that the flesh profiteth nothing; and that His words are spirit, and refer to the gaining for men of Life. Moreover, these assurances are in the very same chapter, and in immediate connection with, and have direct reference to, the second “Except,” and to what He had said in connection therewith.

should be so widely prevalent among Christians, both learned and unlearned, in regard to the second advent of the now glorified Son of man, as to cause them to believe in a literal way that only at some distant day He, the eternal Judge, is to come; and that He shall appear in visible form, sitting on the clouds of vapour over our heads, and accompanied visibly by holy angels or spirits of heaven, and exhibiting a material cross;—all exposed to the terrified, but sensual gaze of the wicked! Do they at all realise what the inspired word tells them?—that without holiness, or more strictly, sanctification, “no man shall see the LORD”;<sup>1</sup> that when we shall indeed see Him, we shall be like Him;<sup>2</sup> or that at the coming to the perfected saint, the vile body of earth shall be changed, and “fashioned like unto His glorious body”;<sup>3</sup>—and that, when so fashioned, it is, like His, compared to the sun which shineth in its strength.<sup>4</sup> Can they not perceive the contradictions which by their literal interpretations they would make in the word of the consistent God?—contradictions therein, however, in the literal sense, and evidently designed to induce us to construe spiritual things spiritually:—how, on the one hand, the sacred word assures us that the world shall see the ascended Jesus no more; and that its unholiness is an absolute bar to that vision; and yet, on the other, that “all the tribes of the earth”—“every eye”—including the wicked, shall see Him;—how again it says, that the LORD and the day of the LORD are at hand; even His own generation not passing previously away;—a present coming of the Eternal in judgment, nevertheless, which they would postpone to the end

<sup>1</sup> Heb. 12: 14.

<sup>2</sup> 1 John 3: 2.

<sup>3</sup> Phil. 3: 21.

<sup>4</sup> Matt. 13: 43; 17: 2. Rev. 1: 16; 10: 1.

of the world; <sup>1</sup>—how still again, at that Coming, they would have the one part of the world received into bliss, and the other consigned to everlasting damnation; while yet, to both classes it is said of inspiration to be a coming *in clouds*; yea, a day of darkness, and of judgment, and of the preaching of the Gospel to the whole world, or, as it is also said, “on the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” <sup>2</sup>

§ 86. THE COMING IN THE CLOUDS.—Rather, forsaking literalism, in what exact harmony with all the Biblical statements upon the subject it is, and with the spiritual, visible fact of judgment upon all, to have the inspired word declare first, how all see the Coming in clouds, and then, immediately, not that any so seeing shall be *admitted into heaven*, but, as is more consonant with the beholding of a “sign” or “manifest token” of that coming in judgment upon the whole earth, that “all the tribes of the earth,” all without exception so seeing, shall mourn and wail at the sight; <sup>3</sup> just as, indeed, is our constant earthly experience. For, however much the coming in clouds may be intended to bless mankind by leading them on to perfection, yet “no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous.” <sup>4</sup> Accordingly, in the representation of the coming in clouds, we do not find any who

<sup>1</sup> The Greek of the apostles’ question in Matt. 24: 3 is as to “the end of the *æon*,” to wit, the Jewish *æon*. They did not ask about “the end of the *world*,” but about the coming in judgment upon the Jews.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. 24: 29-42. Mk. 13: 24-37. Luke 21: 25-36. Amos 5: 18-20.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. 24: 30. Rev. 1: 7. Luke 21: 8-11, 25-36. Zech. 12: 10-14.

<sup>4</sup> Heb. 12: 11.

rejoice, but altogether those who mourn and wail, and who need to be comforted, and upon whom duties which belong to this life are laid. And observe, how very like the representation is to that of the forlorn disciples on the Mount of Olives, on beholding their beloved Master, whose sweet companionship for three whole years had been theirs, *disappearing* from them at last *in a cloud!* And this, even though, as in His present judgments is still the motive, His hands were lifted up in blessing.<sup>1</sup> It required the assurance of angels, an assurance not then fully realised, that He was to come again after His terrible sojourn in clouds, even as He was seen to go; or *out of clouds*, to bring comfort to their faithful hearts at the prospect of seeing Him again. And yet, for all their joyous hopes, a fearful future was before them during that intermediate stay in the clouds, ere they should see Him again; or ere He should reappear in person out of the clouds, to give them the crown of righteousness.<sup>2</sup> And to enable them to endure what meanwhile they would have to undergo, they must needs wait until they should receive the Comforter. Thus He, the Sun of Righteousness, is to come finally out of the cloud in which for a figure He was seen to go;<sup>3</sup> while, during His continuance therein, it is for every one of us "a cloudy day,"<sup>4</sup> a long day of mourning and wailing, and watching and waiting, and of the need of the Comforter. "And now men see not the bright Light which is in the clouds: but the wind (the Holy Spirit) passeth, and cleanseth them."<sup>5</sup> We see the Light of the Sun, but not its brightness.

<sup>1</sup> Luke 24:49-53.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Tim. 4:8.

<sup>3</sup> Acts 1:9-14. Mal. 4:2. <sup>4</sup> Ezek. 30:3; 32:7-9; 34:11-13.

<sup>5</sup> Job 37:21.

§ 87. DESTRUCTION OF "SECOND DEATH."—How very far removed is this representation of the mourning and wailing of *all* who see Him coming in clouds from the representation throughout inspiration of those in whom *perfect* love has cast out fear, and who "love His appearing." These are like their LORD when they see Him; and they are satisfied; and their joy no man taketh from them.<sup>1</sup> They have fought the good fight; and now they are received unto their LORD, to be forever with Him. How can they mourn and wail? Nor is it reasonable, on the one hand, that these should all attain unto perfection at the same time, nor, on the other, that such as from time to time become perfect should have their glorious reward delayed. "We shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump" of victory in each case; "but each man in his own order"; even though with the many it should require thousands of years of judgment, and of consequent mourning and wailing. Still, we are assured, that Death, that is, the only Death which now remains, to wit, the Second Death, shall finally be destroyed, even the Death which brings the mourning and wailing; because at last all shall be subdued unto GOD, and GOD shall be all in all.<sup>2</sup> Thus successively and independently shall it be in respect of each individual;—at first an Enoch,<sup>3</sup> then an Elijah,<sup>4</sup> after that those who came forth after the resurrection of the Deliverer,<sup>5</sup> next, possibly, a St. Paul,<sup>6</sup> or a St. John;<sup>7</sup>—whoever of men, in fact, at any period of

<sup>1</sup> 1 John 3:2; 4:18. 2 Tim. 4:8. Ps. 17:15. John 16:22.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. 15:20-28; 3:13-15. Eph. 1:10, 22, 23. Phil. 2:10, 11. Col. 1:19, 20. Is. 45:23, etc.

<sup>3</sup> Gen. 5:24. Heb. 11:5.

<sup>4</sup> 2 K. 2:11.

<sup>5</sup> Matt. 27:52, 53.

<sup>6</sup> 2 Tim. 4:6-8.

<sup>7</sup> John 21:18-24.



the Coming of Christ, whether immediately, or in the second or third watch, or, alas! after protracted judgment, at a later period,<sup>1</sup> may, in their due succession, at the last gospel trump in each particular case,<sup>2</sup> be found perfect;<sup>3</sup> the dead of old, with their longer opportunities, first attaining, and afterward the living who from time to time may remain upon earth during that coming.<sup>4</sup> That is to say, in the long "last day" of the scriptures,<sup>5</sup> all, in their several order, who theretofore shall have been under the power of the Second Death, shall attain unto the resurrection therefrom.<sup>6</sup> They shall be raised up in this long, "last day,"<sup>7</sup> or æon of perfecting judgment; for the object of "all judgment" is declared to be, that "all men should honour" as a loving Father the good and merciful God and Saviour of the world.<sup>8</sup> For their long, long æon indeed,—the length being due in the case of each

<sup>1</sup> Luke 12: 35-49.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. 15: 20-28, 49-57.

<sup>3</sup> Phil. 3: 10-14, 20, 21.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Th. 4: 15-18.

<sup>5</sup> John 6: 39, 40, 44, 54; 11: 24-25 (mistake as to last day corrected); 12: 48; 5: 25, 30. 1 John 2: 18. 1 Tim. 4: 1. 2 Tim. 3: 1. 2 Pet. 3: 3. Jude 18. Heb. 1: 2; 9: 26. Acts 2: 16, 17. 1 Pet. 1: 5, 20; 4: 2. Job 19: 25. So, "in that day" in the Bible is the usual equivalent of *some day*, or, *at some time*.

<sup>6</sup> There are three resurrections continually mentioned or referred to in the Bible: 1. One which is past, to wit, that from final Death; of which St. Paul speaks, when he says, "If ye then *be risen* with Christ" (Col. 3: 1, referring back to 2: 12). 2. Next, that which should be all the while taking place; of which again St. Paul speaks, when he says, "Awake thou that sleepest, and *arise from the dead*, and Christ shall give thee light" (Eph. 5: 14, a. v.). 3. The final resurrection of the perfected soul in glory. St. Paul's rebuke of Hymenæus and Philetus refers not only to this, but also to the second, when he says, "Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already, and overthrow the faith of some" (2 Tim. 2: 17-19,—verse 19 referring also to the first. And see 1 Tim. 1: 19, 20).

<sup>7</sup> John 6: 39, etc.

<sup>8</sup> John 5: 22, 23.



one of his own procrastinating will,—they partook of the mortal and corruptible in “the old man” within; but at length, we are told, “*the dead shall be raised incorruptible.*”<sup>1</sup> The beginning of this great, universal resurrection going on all through the ages had only waited until the baptism of Jesus into Death had completed the payment of the penalty of sin, and until His resurrection from Death had burst the Gates of Hades, even of that pit wherein previously had been no Water of Life, and into which He brought the preaching of the Gospel of Life, and its unfailing, eternal Hope.<sup>2</sup> And now, how comforting are His loving, gracious words, addressed, through His disciples of long ago, to all, to the end of the world, who will receive them:—“Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”<sup>3</sup> Yea; for His search in the wilderness for each lost sheep whom He came to save will continue, as it is said, *until it is found.*<sup>4</sup> As said the Psalmist, “Through the greatness of thy power shall *thine enemies* submit themselves unto thee. *All the earth* shall worship thee, and shall sing unto thee; they shall sing to thy name.”<sup>5</sup>

#### § 88. SUPERIORITY OF SCRIPTURE OVER PHILOSOPHY.

—How loftily these revelations, whether as respects their explanation of the great fact of our existence in a state of evil and judgment, of their *coherent* setting forth of a high destiny for us all, or their representation

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. 15: 52.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Pet. 3: 19; 4: 6. Heb. 6: 17–20. Luke 12: 49, 50. Matt. 16: 18, 21. Zech. 9: 11.

<sup>3</sup> Luke 12: 32.

<sup>4</sup> Luke 15: 4. Matt. 18: 11.

<sup>5</sup> Ps. 66: 3, 4.

of the relations of the Creator with His creatures, or their no less than superhuman consistency in all profound spiritual matters, compare with the crude and varying ideas of the wisest philosophers throughout the long period of the world's history, and even, in general, with the unlovely views of most Christians, who have been misinterpreting the sacred writings in all the long centuries since the New Testament was given to the world. Consider, for example, how the most intelligent of believing Christians are continually postponing *eternal, perfect* justice, even that of the *eternal, ever perfect* GOD, for thousands of years, without regard to the inconsistent ideas thus necessitated; until, in fact, as they speak, there would be for the greater number no beneficial, elevating use in the administration of such non-eternal, but only future justice; and until its object would simply be, that the punishment of *finite* sin might gratify a malicious, *infinitely prolonged* vengeance and cruelty;<sup>1</sup>—that is to say, the malice of an everlasting devil;<sup>2</sup> thus making the object of “all judgment” not to be that “all men” should honour their Judge, as declared by our LORD,<sup>3</sup> but rather the insatiate gratification of vengeful spite; and this on the part of the best and most merciful of beings—of Him whose mercy endureth for ever! How

<sup>1</sup> There is, indeed, what men might call postponed justice, which is not such at all; where, to render the judgment more effective, the wise Judge for a time delays the stroke. It is often a fearful *necessity*, and would not therefore be true to the nature of GOD, and His merciful purpose, unless so delayed. Related to this, in fact, is a case where, as it is said, “the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full” (Gen. 15: 16).

<sup>2</sup> Is sin, like GOD, infinite? and not being so, can the *finite* sin contain the infinite? On the other hand, if infinite, can a *finite* being contain an infinite sin? See § 13 (a).

<sup>3</sup> John 5: 22, 23.

fearlessly men put dishonour upon God! and in doing so disregard His all-comforting declaration that the object of their very judgments is, that "all should honour" Him! And these unmerciful, self-contradictory views of theirs are an exhibition of what men of the greatest wisdom and learning, although Christians, and with the book of inspiration before them, may unhappily work out for themselves; especially when they rely upon the letter of inspiration; and look for the spiritual meaning of its metaphors on the plane of nature. How by contrast do the results of the opposite method, when carefully pursued, become their own inherent proof, and proclaim the supernatural Source of that unerring consistency and exceeding loftiness of view which always belong to the revelations of the Bible when rightly interpreted! On the other hand, how many other examples of similar low views and inconsistencies we have found on the part of those who reason from "the letter," although with the best efforts of the natural mind! No wonder that among them are some who actually look for, at their distant judgment day, a darkening of the literal *sun* and *moon*, even the changing of the latter into literal blood, and the literal falling of the *stars*! The spiritual application of such parabolic language—so often employed by the old prophets to denote the fall of wicked empires and kingdoms, with their haughty *monarchs* and *queens* and *nobles*—to the judgments now going on upon all that is high and lifted up, and, in fact, upon all men, all of whom in one way or other are making wrongful use of talents vouchsafed, or neglecting opportunities of usefulness, right here and now upon earth, seems to be utterly lost upon these literal interpreters. And they forget the strong

language of the Judge Himself—"I have come to hurl fire on the earth; and what will I, if it has been already kindled!" Or better, "and what do I will (or, would I)? even that it should have been already kindled."<sup>1</sup>

§ 89. BLASPHEMOUS INTERPRETATIONS OF SCRIPTURE.—And they would even insist that the glory and sovereignty of the great God demand the very worst of their unmerciful interpretations;—interpretations, namely, of that God, whom the sacred writings depict as so loving the world as to take our infinitely inferior nature upon Him, and therein to die for its salvation; who thus exceeded in sacrifice, far beyond finite conception,—just as it pertains to His infinite goodness to do,—all other sacrifices that ever were made! and yet a sacrifice for the beloved world which even Christians, by their blasphemous interpretations, would dare hold to have been worse than useless! And let us not forget how these same gross misinterpreters would add to their monstrous notions the claim,

<sup>1</sup> For in addition to effecting our deliverance from Death, to become fully our Saviour, He must also recover us from Sinfulness. But, He goes on to say, He was straitened in His Work. Why? Because at that time the curse of Death was not yet removed. Hence, although by anticipation Judgment was administered already, the flaming sword was still turning every way, barring man from the Tree of Life (John 3: 18; 12: 31. Gen. 3: 24). Observe the consecutiveness of the whole passage: After telling of the judgment according to deeds inflicted upon men, with its many or few stripes, and of men notwithstanding saying in their hearts, The LORD delayeth His coming, Jesus thus proceeds: "I have come to hurl fire on the earth; and what will I? even that it should have been already kindled. But I have a baptism to be baptised with; and how am I straitened till it shall have been accomplished! Suppose ye that I have come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay."—Luke 12: 49–51. And see John 3: 18; 12: 48. 2 Pet. 3: 7. Matt. 27: 52, 53, etc.

that at their long-postponed day of cruel judgment the carnal eyes of the wicked shall literally behold the pure and holy LORD of all in His glory! And again, although they recognise that at His coming the natural in those who see Him is to give place to the spiritual, yet they would represent the august Judge as making His appearance in a natural way, sitting literally upon the fleeting, material things of earth—yea, upon actual clouds of vapour! Such are the incongruous theories—not, let us observe once more, of unbelieving philosophers and metaphysicians, without a Bible, groping in the darkness after the *unrevealed* things of God, of which, without a revelation, they could know *nothing at all*, and whose wiser course would be, veritably, to be agnostics,<sup>1</sup>—but of intelligent and learned Christians, with their Bibles right before them, and striving with all sincerity to make their interpretations; and this, all through the long centuries, early<sup>2</sup> and late!

§ 90. SECOND COMING COMPLEMENTAL TO FIRST.—The explanation by the Christian system of the facts of our existence in this world culminates in declaring the immediate Second Advent of the Son of God to be

<sup>1</sup> Deut. 29: 29.

<sup>2</sup> What a commentary this upon the value of the testimony of the uninspired early Christians to truth and the interpretation of scripture! The Bible itself shows how prone they were to err even in apostolic days; and who does not know the immense changes which the lapse of but a single century will produce? Their testimony, in fact, is only of value, when not opposed to inspiration and universally concordant, and from widely distant, independent sources. In respect of our present subject, most of the early Christians—one is tempted to speak even more strongly—seem to have been believers in the literal second coming of the Son of man in *visible* form to all; and that it would take place in their own day and generation; thus evidencing the little reliance to be placed upon them, in general, as interpreters of the word of God.



necessarily complementary to the First, and to involve the concurrent mission of the Unpardoning Spirit; in order that sovereign man, after his restoration to Life, may be led on to perfection in conformity with the eternal Justice and Mercy of GOD, and without the least coercion of the never-to-be-repent-ed-of Gift of Free-Will.<sup>1</sup> But it will be seen that the primary, fundamental idea of that system is the First Advent. This is the Foundation Rock on which the whole system is built.<sup>2</sup> It was this Advent which burst the Gates of Hades, and gained the recovery from thence of the great congregation of the dead, without the loss of a single soul.<sup>3</sup> Through this the world, the whole world, when "dead in trespasses and sins," by an act of free Grace to all alike, was quickened, or made alive; that is, re-begotten, or "born again" from the dead.<sup>4</sup> With wonderful unanimity and repeated emphasis this fundamental feature of the system, this Rock-Foundation,(a) as it is called, is brought to the front, not only by all the writers of the New Testament, but in many a parable, and allegorical story, and prophecy of the Old. Through this, as it is said, both Jews and Gentiles are now become "the household of GOD, being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus being its chief Corner Stone."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Rom. 11: 29. Deut. 30: 15, 19.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. 3: 11-16. 2 Tim. 2: 19. Is. 28: 16, 17. Gen. 49: 24. Deut. 32: 4, 15, 18, 30, 31. Ps. 118: 14-29. Matt. 21: 42. Acts 4: 11-12. 1 Pet. 2: 4-8, and many others.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. 16: 18. John 1: 29; 4: 42; 5: 25-29; 11: 51, 52. 1 John 2: 2; 4: 14. Note in John 11: 51, 52, how "the children of GOD" become the equivalent of "all" or "the world" of the other texts.

<sup>4</sup> Eph. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Eph. 2: 19, 20. Or, "Christ Jesus Himself being chief corner stone."



To effect the new birth of the whole world into Life, therefore, Jesus had been sent from GOD. This was His special mission, to which all the other facts of His life, including His instructions as a Teacher, were but incidental. Hence, when Nicodemus came especially to learn why Jesus had been sent from GOD, and began by acknowledging His divine mission as a Teacher, Jesus pointed out to him at once the true, fundamental purpose of that mission, declaring the primary need for man to be "born again," even "from above";<sup>1</sup> that is, not *from below*; since man, being dead by reason of sin under the holy law of GOD, could never by his own faith or works be justified unto Life. As St. Paul expressly declares, by the Righteousness of Christ justification unto Life has come upon all men as a Free Gift.<sup>2</sup> And in logical order, until the primary need was supplied, of what use could teaching be?

§ 91. CHRIST'S MISSION ONE OF LOVE AND MERCY. —And with like congruity of idea Jesus further stated, that He had not come on His present mission even to judge; men being under condemnation already. Rather, His mission was altogether one of Love and Mercy. He would first freely give Life to all men by His own Faith, with its perfect Works, in their stead; and after that would have them exercise their own faith, with appropriate works, to become qualified for everlasting Life. He says: "For GOD so loved the world, that He hath given<sup>3</sup> His only begotten Son, that every one that believeth in Him should not perish, but should have eternal Life. For GOD hath

<sup>1</sup> The normal meaning is, it may be remembered, "from above."

<sup>2</sup> Rom. 5: 18.

<sup>3</sup> In translating this passage it must be remembered, that the Divine Speaker's mission was then of the present, not of the past.

not sent His Son into the world to judge the world; but *that the world through Him should be saved.*" Thus, in accordance with the everlasting mercy and love of GOD, and because all being sinners there was no class deserving of special favour, He makes His mission to be entirely irrespective, or for all men alike. He declares that mission to be the result of GOD's *Love for the world*,—a Love that knows no end,—and to have for its object that *the world* should be saved. It was therefore proclaimed to us to be the Purpose of the unchangeable GOD, begun in logical order to be executed fundamentally in the First Advent, to *save the world*. As St. Paul says again, "For GOD hath not appointed us unto wrath, but *unto the obtaining of salvation* through our LORD Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we *wake* or *sleep*, we should live together with Him."<sup>1</sup> And again:

"According as He (GOD the Father) hath chosen us in Him (Christ) before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him: having in love<sup>2</sup> predestinated us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, whereby He hath been gracious to us in the Beloved. . . . Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, (according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Him), during<sup>3</sup> a dispensation of the fulness (or, during an administration of the full period) of the times, to gather up to

<sup>1</sup> 1 Th. 5: 9, 10.

<sup>2</sup> I adopt here the punctuation of Griesbach, which is also given as an alternative reading in the margin of the r. v. See the ancient authorities cited by Griesbach.

<sup>3</sup> The true meaning of the Greek preposition *eis* with periods of time, as already mentioned.

Himself all things in the Christ, both those in the heavens<sup>1</sup> and those upon earth."<sup>2</sup>

And to give one more example of the exultant declarations of the apostle of the unchangeable purpose of the unchangeable God, we read:

"For I am persuaded, that neither *death*, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers (not all the devils with their terribly debasing wiles), nor things present, nor *things to come*, nor (pride-producing) height, nor (any degraded) *depth* nor *any other creature*, shall be able to separate us from the Love of GOD, which is in Christ Jesus our LORD."<sup>3</sup>

§ 92. THE REASONABLENESS OF THE ADVENTS.—Let us then not fail to take note, that, as thus explained by the scriptures themselves, how perfectly conformable both the First and Second Advents are with the *eternal* Love and Justice of GOD, and with the best and highest interests of men, as well as with their present condition in this world. Surely, to the reasonableness of the system, both Godward and manward, as thus revealed, the mind and heart of man alike bear testimony, and upon its truth natural religion sets its approving seal. That we may appreciate that reasonableness the more, let us keep in mind that the two Advents are revelations and manifestations to the creature of what, however, has always taken place in the counsels of Heaven from the

<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, the dead who now may be in the several places of the departed, even those who "sleep," as they are designated in the preceding cited text.

<sup>2</sup> Eph. 1: 4-6, 9, 10.

<sup>3</sup> Rom. 8: 38, 39. See § 49 for the passage more at length, with comments.

beginning of creation; or, as we are expressly told, that the Lamb hath been slain<sup>1</sup> from the foundation of the world:<sup>2</sup>—so that the logical order is primarily the First Advent, and then the Second. And let us note also again, as a corollary to this *eternal* Love and Justice where the LORD is ever at hand, what an unreasonable contrast to the system is presented by the crude ideas of even the wise and prudent among Christians, who would postpone the full exercise of these *eternal* attributes to a future, far-distant judgment day! And let us particularly note the *necessity* of the explanation given by the system to the facts relating to the condition of the creature which are right before our eyes; remembering at the same time, that if there were another explanation to be given, it also would have to be vouched for by revelation, so far as the *instrumentality* or *manner* of our new birth into Life is concerned; since to the counsels of Heaven the whole problem properly and exclusively belongs. It is different as to the *necessity* of the new birth. For in view of the wages of sin being utter Death, and of all men being sinners, what thoughtful mind is there that ought not to know the patent necessity for all men to be “born again” into Life, and to receive in addition, in order to do good works, of “the Spirit of Truth”? For the very fact that we live makes it patent to us that in some way or other God has conferred upon us Life in the place of the Death produced by Sin; and so again our good and evil conduct makes it just as patent that we have within us both the Spirit of Truth and the spirit of error; and therefore, in respect of our good

<sup>1</sup> The perf. passive in the Greek.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. 13: 8. And see Rom. 16: 25. 1 Cor. 2: 7. Eph. 1: 4; 3: 9, 11. 2 Tim. 1: 9. 1 Pet. 1: 2, 20.

deeds, that we are manifestly born of the Holy Spirit of God, which is the only Source of the goodness in men.<sup>1</sup> The *manner*, however, in which we have been born again into Life and the Spirit is, of course, without revelation, altogether beyond us; our dual birth being a supernatural truth in respect of which we are the mere recipients of the benefits conferred. We should never know the *manner*, therefore, except in so far as it may be revealed; but the *necessity* of the new birth is quite apparent to any one who believes the wages of Sin to be immediate Death.

§ 93. THE NECESSITY OF RESURRECTION.—In the interview of Nicodemus with our LORD it has been pointed out, that there is an evident implication, in the opening words of Jesus, of the utter valuelessness of teaching, if there were not conferred upon men a new Immortal Life “from God,” in the place of the Death to which they are normally sentenced under His holy law. It may be added, on that supposition, that there would be a similar lack of benefit to them (if works were possible to the dead) from the doing of even good works, and especially those of self-sacrifice and of religious observance. It may be well to notice how St. Paul pursues precisely this line of thought in the beautiful fifteenth chapter of his First Epistle to the Corinthians. Therein, as usual, the apostle urges us to “awake to righteousness, and sin not.” But he sees no benefit in so doing, or in teaching, or in the religious observances of Christianity, if there has not been gained for man the resurrection of the dead. He argues: “If Christ hath not been raised, then both vain

<sup>1</sup> Acts 17: 28. Rom. 8: 14-17, 21. Gal. 4: 6, 7; 5: 18-25.  
1 John 3: 8-10, 14-19; 4: 2-16.



is our preaching, and vain is your faith. . . . For if the dead are not raised, neither hath Christ been raised; and . . . ye are yet in your sins." And he adds of the dead who have fallen asleep with faith in Christ, that they simply have perished. His idea is, that if Christ hath not been raised, like others in that event, He also must now be dead; in which case our faith in a resurrection of the dead, through one who is himself hopelessly dead, must be in vain. And he goes on therefore to declare how emptied of its significance becomes that sacrament, in particular, which was specially intended by our LORD to speak to us of the resurrection! For if Christ Himself is still dead, then is He not our Life, but all men are still dead before the law. And accordingly, the apostle speaks of those who are baptised, as baptised only "in respect of<sup>1</sup> the dead." His words are: "For<sup>2</sup> what shall they do who are baptised in respect of the dead?<sup>3</sup> If the dead

<sup>1</sup> The normal meaning of *huper* is *over*. It may also mean *in respect of, concerning, in the name of, for the benefit of, for the sake of, in behalf of, for*, etc. The versions render it *for*.

<sup>2</sup> "For" better gives the force of *epei* here, than the "else" of the versions. After showing with emphasis what Christ's work will bring about for all, the apostle returns to his previous line of thought and shows in turn the idleness of baptism, if Christ be not risen, and the vanity of His preaching and of our faith.

<sup>3</sup> "In respect of the dead." It is the plural number; because perhaps of its reference to both Christ and ourselves as assumed to be dead. The transition of meaning from *over*, the primary sense of *huper*, to *in respect of*, or *in regard to*, may be illustrated by the following sentence: "Don't worry over—*i. e.*, in respect of, or in regard to—what is past." So, the apostle's idea is, "Why baptise—a ceremony indicative of faith in the resurrection and the life—if we believe that Christ is not raised, and that there is no resurrection of the dead? Why then baptise over the dead?" To render "for" has the same idea; but I have heard of educated presbyters who because of this rendering did not understand the passage, and avowed it publicly.



are not raised at all, why then are they baptised in respect of them (or of dead persons, such as the assumption would make Christ to be)? What! and do we stand in jeopardy every hour?" In other words, are we, perishing unfortunates, under the curse of Death, and at any moment to die for ever, holding an empty ceremony about Immortality "over" the dead, to wit, over the dead Christ and ourselves, also dead. For if Christ be dead, baptism contains no assurance of a resurrection from the dead, but is an idle, unprofitable ceremony; and men still remain in jeopardy of Death, even as the apostle says, every hour. With the curse therefore continuing over us, what is our baptism but for the dead? Nay, continues the apostle, of what advantage to me is all my dying daily to the flesh, denying myself its desires; or my awful fighting with wild beasts, when put before them at Ephesus? Rather, "if the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." Let us indulge our appetites to the full, and have at least that much gratification out of our brief survival of the sentence of Death.<sup>1</sup>

§ 94. THE GIFT OF RENEWED LIFE.—I call special attention to the statement of what we may or may not

<sup>1</sup> Of course, normally, the sentence of Death, but for Christ, would have had immediate execution; but St. Paul is reasoning from the actual, evident suspension of that execution until natural death, and on the hypothesis that Christ had not risen. The uselessness of religious teaching, of good works, of religious observances, when this life is all, is the idea, without endeavouring to account for the suspension of the execution of the law upon sinners, apart from Christ, as is the hypothesis. It was enough that the reader acknowledged the wages of sin to be Death, without reference to the fact that in the day of sin the sinner should surely die.

know of ourselves in regard to the Gift of renewed Life; that, namely, we *can* perceive the *necessity*, but *cannot* discover for ourselves the *manner* of the new birth; for it is, as has already been mentioned, the statement of our LORD Himself to Nicodemus; and it is all-important to a proper understanding of His "Except," as it has been called, that the pathway to such an understanding should be cleared by this significant statement. It shows beyond reasonable question that He was not at all speaking of the *necessity* to be baptised; for who by his own natural or spiritual powers, without the aid of revelation from heaven, as was the case with Nicodemus, could possibly perceive the *necessity* to be baptised, in order to be "born again"? And how much more impossible was it to Nicodemus than to us, seeing that, at the time the words were spoken to him, the sacrament of Christian baptism was not yet instituted! And yet Nicodemus was even reproached, because, being "the Teacher," or "Master of Israel," he did not perceive the primary necessity of a new birth of Water and the Spirit before that of teaching. Certainly, then, that new birth had no reference to Christian baptism, and was something properly within the knowledge of Nicodemus. In view, indeed, of what has been cited in multifold detail of the revelations to us by the instructed and inspired disciples of the Divine Founder of our holy religion, and with such supernatural harmony, putting clearly before us that we are now the children of God because of the redemption of the world from Death and its consequent resurrection unto Life through Jesus Christ; and in view of Jesus being expressly styled by them the Source and Giver of the Water of Life;—even as the prophets of old had also spoken of the LORD, the Redeemer, as the

Fountain of *Living Water*;—there is less excuse for us than there was for Nicodemus for not understanding the necessity of the new birth of Water and the Spirit; especially as we also better understand why our LORD Himself repeatedly indicated water to be significant of His own Personality and of His especial Work as the Cleanser. In truth, not long before, it is carefully stated, even in His first miracle upon going to the Gentiles, or to mankind at large, how He suggestively changed the colourless water of just *six* waterpots of *stone*, full to the brim, into a like fulness of blood-red wine, approved of as good by the one in authority; and how He thereupon offered it indiscriminately as a Free Gift; or to all alike, to the evil just the same as the good. These waterpots were used for acts of symbolic purification, and in their number and fulness were suggestive of *all* that man could do for his own purification; and in their material and the colourlessness of the water as opposed to blood the symbol of Life, the result would seem to be declared; indicating that man's works had left him dead as stone;<sup>1</sup> just as was also

<sup>1</sup> In the number *six*, and in the "full to the brim," and in the lack of colour, there was a threefold emphasis, referring, it may be, to the failure of man to attain by his works Life, or Holiness, or Happiness. In the approval of "the governor of the feast" we are reminded of "the voice from Heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Here, like as in the flood and in baptism, "water" has symbolically the sense of Death; and in the baptism of Jesus therein it prefigured His baptism into Death; thus becoming the symbol of Him, and of our Life. Hence before the creation of Life the earth is consistently represented as covered with Water, with the Divine Spirit brooding thereon, causing at length "man"—all men—to be born typically of Water and Spirit. Hence, moreover, the great significance of "the everlasting covenant," that "the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh" (Gen. 9: 15, 16). For the covenant is made

shown by the failure of the wine; the need being there-upon significantly supplied by the Son of God. So, in the next chapter He tells the woman of Samaria of the living water to be given by Him for our unending Life.

§ 95. THE SUPERNATURAL CONSISTENCY OF DISCIPLES' TEACHING.—It would be a marvellous thing, indeed, after hearing so much from the disciples, and with such supernatural consistency, and these mostly ignorant men, in the midst of a benighted world, and brought up in the very centre of bigotry and intolerance, and yet, every one of them telling harmoniously of the Free Gift of new Life to all men irrespectively through Christ alone, if, notwithstanding, we should have to learn other doctrine from Christ Himself, their great Teacher;—if in His teaching, namely, there should be no common justification of all men unto Life, and the Gift of Life should be not absolutely free, but strictly conditional, and bestowed only upon a few, who, being specially called, should heed the call, either by becoming believers or by being baptised! To receive from the very GOD of reason, contrary to what the inspired disciples had afterwards taught, a system of doctrine whereby the dead should restore themselves to Life, and, by some occult power in their non-existent state, should render themselves immortal, and even beget themselves to be His children; and should do such mighty things, moreover, after sin had killed them; would certainly be a most preposterous, as well as incongruous, outcome of our investigations into the

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with "every living creature of all flesh," and is an assurance to all of Immortal *Life*.

truth of scripture! Surely, surely, none could desire such a grossly discordant, unreasonable outcome, but the man who values his peculiar, partisan views above holy truth, the consistency of the Bible, the welfare of man, and the honour of GOD. What possible high motive or spiritual profit could there be to any Christian to have blasted for a single one of his fellow-creatures that "hope of eternal (æonic) Life, which GOD, that cannot lie, promised *before æonic times*."<sup>1</sup> Should we not rather all alike be comforted with the assurance that Christ is indeed *our Life*;<sup>2</sup> and that "GOD hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our LORD Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we shall live together with Him?"<sup>3</sup>

§ 96. ETERNAL LIFE HAS AN ETERNAL FOUNDATION. —Thank GOD! the hope of *eternal* Life has an *eternal Foundation*, and is not *based* upon the accidents and uncertainties of the works of the creature; but is "as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, even entering into the inner side of the veil; whither a Forerunner for us has entered, (even) Jesus, having become a High Priest for ever after the order of Mel-

<sup>1</sup> Tit. 1: 2. The translation is literal, and is one of the applications of *æonic* in the N. T. to periods with beginnings and endings, and (note especially) to periods here on earth, *before* the soul's final perfection. See Rom. 16: 25, "kept secret in æonic times";  
<sup>2</sup> Th. 1: 9, "æonic destruction," *i. e.*, the state of one exiled from the LORD's presence, or, not complete destruction, but that which continues for its æon; 2 Th. 2: 16, "æonic consolation," *i. e.*, while needed by those under discipline; 2 Tim. 1: 9, "given us in Christ Jesus *before* æonic times." Jude 7 describes as æonic the temporary fire which overthrew Sodom, etc. The spiritual fire of the wrath of God is eternal, but not its application in a given instance.

<sup>2</sup> Col. 3: 4.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Th. 5: 9-11.



chizedek.”<sup>1</sup> “For the Grace of God hath appeared, that bringeth salvation to all men.”<sup>2</sup> For “God our Saviour” is One whose will is unchangeable, and “who willeth all men to be saved, and to come unto a knowledge of truth”; and accordingly Christ Jesus “gave Himself a ransom for all, the proof (to be) in its own times.”<sup>3</sup> Such, certainly, both in respect of the salvation of all men, and of the manner in which it has been fundamentally wrought out, is the uniform teaching of the instructed disciples of Jesus. And their supernatural concordance in multifold detail, not only with one another, but with the sayings of Jesus Himself, has been in measure illustrated. And here let me call attention to one of these sayings, showing incidentally, first, that the re-begetting of all men into Life was being consummated at the time He spoke, or through His Life of Righteousness unto Death; and, next, that the deeds of men form no part of that regeneration, but have their reward thereafter. We read: “And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed Me in the regeneration,<sup>4</sup> when the Son of man shall sit upon the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one who hath left homes” etc. “shall receive a hundred fold, and inherit eternal

<sup>1</sup> Heb. 6: 17-20.

<sup>2</sup> Tit. 2: 11.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Tim. 2: 3-6. “Its own times”; *i. e.*, from time to time, as each soul becomes perfected; as we might also translate, “in its proper times.”

<sup>4</sup> Strictly “regeneration” or “begetting again.” If we place the comma before, and omit it after, “in the regeneration,” it would simply indicate the regeneration at the time not to have been completed, or not until the Crucifixion, and that (as in fact is said) rewards follow the ascension of the Son of man to Heaven; which is the logical order, although previously given, like regeneration itself, in anticipation.



(æonic) Life.”<sup>1</sup> That is, “he shall receive an hundred fold now in this time,” the regeneration spoken of being now accomplished, “and in the æon to come eternal Life.”<sup>2</sup> And Jesus promised this of “every one”; because all “in the regeneration” were to be regenerated; and unless this were strictly true, He would not have made the promise. And so all men have the new Life, through the regeneration, and are rewarded according to their deeds. If brevity permitted, it would be further confirmatory of the truths herein presented, to examine at length the other epistles of the New Testament with the same care which has been exercised in the case of the Epistle to the Romans, and partly also in respect of one or two others. For even the one-page epistle of St. Jude tells at the start of the Foundation of Christianity in “the common salvation,” and of the dreamings<sup>3</sup> of those perverters thereof, who, ignoring the absolute necessity to final salvation of all the fruits of faith in perfection, use the opportunity of renewed Life, to “defile the flesh,” “turning *the Grace* of our God into lasciviousness, and denying our only Master and LORD Jesus Christ.”<sup>4</sup> After thus impliedly reminding us how in various ways Jesus had said that the holy law of GOD was not to be abolished by Him, or that not “one iota or one accent” (one jot or tittle) should pass therefrom, “till all things should be fulfilled,” the apostle expressly illustrates

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 19: 28, 29.

<sup>2</sup> Mk. 10: 29, 30—“Ye are they which have continued with me in my trials.” (Luke 22: 28.)

<sup>3</sup> St. Jude well styles them “dreamings”; for faith without works is an abstraction—an empty dream; and the same is true of the idea of justification *into Life* through the faith of the dead, whom sin has killed.

<sup>4</sup> See to the same effect 2 Pet. 2: 1.

the condemnation of the ungodly as a Second Death; putting us in remembrance how that the LORD, after saving people out of Egypt, giving them Life in place of Destruction, "the *second* time destroyed them that believed not." And he further proceeds to tell of the fallen angels as under punishment "for a judgment of a great day."<sup>1</sup> And for an additional example of inevitable judgment according to deeds, or of the Second Death, he mentions the æonic fire in which Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, were consumed. And so, he says, those who now abuse the Grace of God are "*twice* dead,"—that is, dead under Sin, from which Death, however, they have been recovered by that Grace, and dead "the second time" under their unpardonable Sinfulness; and in consequence receiving that Judgment of the Second Death from which there is no escape, but which will surely be visited upon them according to their deeds.<sup>2</sup> And in thus describing unpardonable sinners as "*twice* dead,"<sup>3</sup> he uses in a manner the figure of our LORD of the corrupt tree and its corrupt fruit, styling such sinners "*autumn trees without fruit.*" Moreover, showing that theirs is a Destruction in Life, or a living Destruction, and not necessarily of permanent duration, he calls them "*wandering stars*, for whom hath been reserved the blackness of darkness for the (*i. e.* their) æon." In other words, as behooves the fallen, they suffer "a judgment of a great day." And he

<sup>1</sup> The literal Greek.

<sup>2</sup> St. Jude, like St. James, particularises, among the sins of the "*twice* dead," that, perhaps universal sin, of "shewing respect of persons for the sake of advantage." (Jude 16.)

<sup>3</sup> For while wilfully continuing in sin, it is better for them not to have been born again. The First Death is emphasised in the Second.

accordingly tells them, how even Enoch, only the seventh from Adam, had so long ago warned us, that "the LORD *has come* with His holy myriads, to execute judgment upon all men."<sup>1</sup> And therefore, the apostle urges, that we should build ourselves up upon our most holy Faith, and also exert ourselves for the salvation of our fellows, according to our several opportunities and abilities, "hating even the garment spotted by the flesh," or by the old man within.

§ 97. JUDE CONFIRMS THE CHRISTIAN SYSTEM.— Thus does even the brief epistle of St. Jude, which I have only examined because of its brevity, and in a most cursory manner, confirm at all points the system of Christianity which is to be found in the Epistle to the Romans as hereinbefore set forth. In the other epistles that confirmation becomes even the more striking because of their more extended development of the essential features of the Christian system. Having then, through them, gained some insight into that system, and not only from the epistles just specially mentioned, but also from the others and the scriptures at large, and having had the system thus explained and developed by those who had received the personal

<sup>1</sup> Why is Enoch so particularly described as "the *seventh* from Adam"? Is it a parable of the First Death, and of the final gaining of heaven? *Seven*, we know, is the number of perfection, unto which Enoch attained; and Adam, of course, is representative of the law of Sin and Death.—I may here remark that it is a matter of no practical importance whether St. Jude was or was not here quoting from an uninspired book. It is the substance of the revelation as to spiritual truth which the apostle was inspired to deliver, although he should at the same time, perhaps, be exhibiting both his own individual ignorance and by what weak instruments, with a supernatural concord, GOD was choosing to show forth His profound truths.

instruction of its Divine Founder, and who had had all things brought to their remembrance by the inspiration of the Spirit, we shall now, I trust, be the better able to understand the immediate personal teaching of the LORD Himself, particularly that relating to our present subject, or to the new birth of mankind. For surely *we* should not presume to be, nor should we presume *Him* to be, at disagreement with the uniform teaching of His own instructed and inspired disciples. And if His teaching as a matter of course is in harmony with theirs, shall we venture to refuse that supernatural, uniform teaching in which they and He, our Master, are so preternaturally at one, merely because it is destructive (instead of being thankful that it is so) of certain interpretations and unwarrantable glosses heretofore put upon His sacred words by the teaching of uninspired men, however high, and exalted, and learned, and wise, and prudent? Rather, in fact, it was against the teaching of this very class of persons that our LORD has seen fit to put us particularly on our guard. And on the other hand, the Gifts of God, which have been vouchsafed to each one for his especial use and guidance, are always commanded by Him to be maintained in all their efficacy; and these, accordingly, both from the Gift and the Command, have received for the individual a special, twofold divine authority. Subordinate only to inspiration itself, "the spirit of man is the lamp of the LORD."<sup>1</sup>

§ 98. THE SPIRIT AND THE CHURCHES.—To keep that lamp shining in undimmed brightness, and to increase the intensity of its light, were especial cares

<sup>1</sup> Prov. 20: 27. 1 Cor. 2: 10, 11, 15. Luke 11: 33-36; 12: 57. Ps. 119: 105. 2 Pet. 1: 19-21.

of our LORD. He accordingly tells us, using the same figure of speech, "The lamp of the body is thine eye. . . . Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness."<sup>1</sup> And because He knew the servile tendencies of men, even to the neglect of the Gifts of GOD, and what would be the increasing power over their souls of the churches, He points to these expressly as the most dangerous sources of error. Not content with what He had said upon earth, or through the inspired writers, even at last from the height of heaven, and among His last words to men, He would add emphasis to His numerous cautions. It is from thence that He bids us give heed, not to the churches, but to what the Spirit says to them. His command is, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto (not *by*) the churches." And to make the emphasis most extraordinary, so that no obedient soul may fail to take note thereof, the command is *seven* times repeated!<sup>2</sup> It is an emphasis second only to the repetition for twenty-six times in one psalm (Ps. 136) of another generally unaccepted truth, to wit, that the mercy of the LORD *endureth for ever*. And take note with what careful particularity this wonderfully emphasised command of Jesus is made to apply to every one without exception—"He that hath an ear." He says in effect that just as freely and independently as GOD has given to each one his own ears, so freely and independently does He require of each one the use of his own reason in respect of what he hears. And especially would the great Head of the Church have the individual use his own ears and reason in respect of what the

<sup>1</sup> Luke 11: 33-36.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. 2: 7, 11, 17, 29; 3: 6, 13, 22. And see also 13: 9. Matt. 11: 15, 25; 13: 9-16, 43. Mk. 4: 9-13, 21-25.



revealing Spirit has said to the churches themselves; as though just there were the greatest danger of slavish submission to human influences or assumptions which tend to the subjugation of the private judgment. In precise accordance with His use of a man's individual eyes, as being the sure indication that they were given for the man to see all things for himself, He now draws a similar inference as to the hearing of the ears. And so therefore it is, He says, of the reason and the judgment, of which the eyes and ears are but the outer portals. In the number of the churches, *seven*, we have another spiritual indication of the fulness and universality of the application of our LORD's command; or that it applies to all churches, as well as to all men. No one of the seven is excepted—not even the much-commended church of Smyrna. In the interpretation, therefore, of what the Spirit saith to the churches, that is, in the interpretation of the Bible, no church is to be regarded as infallible; nor all of them together. It is, on the contrary, the individual who is made the responsible judge for himself of what the Spirit saith. The unchangeable LORD of all has declared a principle which is of permanent obligation, and is applicable to all churches and times, and to all that have ears or reason. In particular, He will not have a man through the traditions of the churches to be induced to make "void the word of God."<sup>1</sup>

§ 99. "BEWARE OF FALSE PROPHETS."—And not only in respect of the churches, but of the spiritual instructors in the churches, most consistently, Jesus has given us unmistakable caution. In opposition to the *high priest* himself, as well as to the chief priests of the

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 15: 6, r. v.



Church, in His own day, He said to the common people, “Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?”<sup>1</sup> Could He possibly have made plainer the obligation of private judgment resting upon us against all ecclesiastical authority, however high? Indeed, it was against the high priest, and chief priests, and elders, that He was specially striving to guard the people,— even the “babes” against “the wise and prudent.”<sup>2</sup> But let us hear now another of His commands, and to all again without exception, and applying also to all churches, teachers, hearers, times, and places. He says: “Beware of false prophets (*i.e.* interpreters<sup>3</sup>), which come to you in *sheep’s* clothing.” For observe: It is the people, one and all, who are told to beware, and who are thus commanded of themselves to judge what is true or false in their spiritual teachers, no matter how legitimate may be the sheep’s clothing in which they may teach.<sup>4</sup> Again: So universal always, as consistency requires, does He make the obligation of private judgment, that He takes especial pains to press the obligation home upon the humble and the lowly. With His customary emphasis of repetition He gives us two parables of the same tenor,<sup>5</sup> wherein the man who would not use his single talent or pound as freely and independently as did those possessed of more, has it taken from him, and is cast into outer darkness; even as is continually happening to dependent, unheeded souls, before our very eyes. For in

<sup>1</sup> Luke 12: 54, 57.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. 11: 25.

<sup>3</sup> In the Bible a prophet (*pro-phet*) is more often one who *tells forth*, than one who *foretells* (*fore-tells*). That is, he is generally an expounder, interpreter, and exhorter. Matt. 7: 15.

<sup>4</sup> So His apostle St. Paul, Gal. 1: 6-12; and St. Peter, 2 Pet. 2: 1-3, 15-21; and St. John, 2 John 4, 10, 11.

<sup>5</sup> Matt. 25. Luke 19.

all the churches, to a more or less degree, *authority*, rather than *argument*, is apt to lead, and the people to follow; and the result becomes necessarily ignorance, and error, and downright inattention to what GOD Himself has said in His holy word; and the man who depends upon authority is veritably cast into outer darkness.<sup>1</sup> The parable of the talents follows immediately after that of the five wise and five foolish virgins, in which the duty of each individual to procure his oil for himself is strongly enforced; and all servile dependency upon others in the matter of spiritual enlightenment is condemned; and for those who so depend the result is here too declared to be—outer darkness. Thus then, over and over again, and in varied manner, our LORD shows the exceeding importance of the individual being equipped from within, instead of from without, for his great spiritual warfare against the powers of darkness; and of his learning at all times to depend upon himself. For it is obviously no way, by accustoming a man to the blind, abject submission of a slave, to educate him to be the LORD'S freeman,<sup>2</sup> and to preserve, ever unsullied, his Heaven-conferred sovereignty of will, and sturdy watchfulness against all sources of temptation, however high, and strong, and overbearing.

§ 100. WARNING AGAINST ERROR.—Of each one, therefore, the duty is, to use most zealously and carefully, and as independently as they were given, his own special talents, as entrusted to him, however humble they may be;<sup>3</sup> and of all things not to be so set in error,

<sup>1</sup> See Is. 29: 9-14; 30: 1.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. 7: 22.

<sup>3</sup> Mk. 13: 37. The command therefore is of unlimited application.

or enthralled in slavery, in the face of the Master's will, as to put human authority, on any plea, however plausible, above the teaching of the LORD Himself. Rather, putting down the partisan prejudices of "the old man," and, as St. Peter says, "knowing this first," or above all, "that no prophecy<sup>1</sup> of scripture is of exclusive interpretation"—that, in fact, the interpretation is not private, but public and common—and, as St. Paul says, that "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning";<sup>2</sup> let us, following St. Peter's express words in denial of any exclusive right of interpretation, give heed therefore, as he accordingly directs, to the "sure word of prophecy," "as unto a lamp shining in a dark place"<sup>(a)</sup>; and, pursuant to what he urges in another passage, let us, "as newborn babes, desire the reasonable, unadulterated<sup>3</sup> milk that we may grow thereby unto salvation."<sup>4</sup> And following also St. Paul, let us remember how he says again, "Quench not the Spirit; despise not prophesyings; prove all things; hold fast that which is good."<sup>5</sup> And still again, "Examine your own selves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves."<sup>6</sup> And, to give one more example, how he writes to Timothy, "that from a babe thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."<sup>7</sup> For the apostles and sacred writers in general, on this subject, as on all others, are in accord with the teaching of the Master;

<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, teaching.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. 15: 4.

<sup>3</sup> The Greek is *unadulterated*, or *unmixed*,—*i. e.*, with the biasing interpretations of men, especially of those who claim authority to interpret.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Pet. 2: 2.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Th. 5: 19–21.

<sup>6</sup> 2 Cor. 13: 5.

<sup>7</sup> 2 Tim. 3: 15.

and these are but a few of the many examples both from Him and them enforcing the obligation of private judgment.<sup>1</sup> For that matter, our responsibility in this respect is one which, do what we will, it is impossible to avoid; seeing that whether it be exercised, neglected, or abused, or attempted to be saddled upon another, the act is entirely our own. And yet, when we consider the varying opinions of men in regard to the duty, and the opposing notions of most theologians, who are supposed, too, to derive their inspiration from the Bible, it is truly preternatural, that throughout its sacred pages, from the Books of Moses down, not one inharmonious text upon the subject can be found; not one of its many writers, and these of such different times and places, striking a discordant note. In view then of our heavy personal responsibility to judge all things, and to be judged for doing so of no man,<sup>2</sup> and recognising the solemnity and emphasis with which

<sup>1</sup> In the face of so many texts, or even if there were but one, how idle it is to discuss whether John 5: 39 should read "Search," or, "Ye search the scriptures"; especially as either rendering is literally correct, and even with the latter the search is impliedly commended. More than that, our LORD in the context condemns His opponents for not having been thorough in their search; and for not having interpreted the scriptures aright. And He concludes with this alarming statement, showing in clear light the necessity of searching the scriptures, referring in particular to those of Moses:—"But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" (Verse 47.) If we have not correct knowledge of, and faith in, what Moses said, we cannot be true believers in what Christ has taught. The proper inference from this may be given in the words of Isaiah—"Seek ye out of the Book of the LORD, and read" (34: 16). Alongside the above statement of the Master, let us put another:—"If they hear not (*i. e.*, will not search) Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one should rise from the dead." (Luke 16: 31.) So indispensable is the duty imposed upon us by the LORD Himself.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. 2: 15.

that responsibility is so often reiterated in the word of God,<sup>1</sup> even from the time when Moses told us explicitly that, verily, "those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever;"<sup>2</sup> let us conscientiously be on our guard against all former prepossessions, and now at length carefully continue to examine for ourselves the declarations of our LORD in His interview with Nicodemus.

§ 101. CHRIST AND NICODEMUS.—The sacred narrative thus opens: "Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews." My conscientious convictions put me so often in opposition to prevailing opinion, that, in general, it is a positive pleasure to find myself at one with others. But in the case of Nicodemus, in the interests of charity, and still more because of sympathy for the memory of a much-abused man, who was one of the noblest of the earth, and therefore from a sense of justice, I take a greater pleasure in disagreeing with all who speak harshly of

<sup>1</sup> It is the private judgment of a lady to the word as received which is enforced in 2 John 4, 10, 11.

<sup>2</sup> Deut. 29: 29. And the object, let us remember, is stated—"that we may do all the words of this law." For the evident purpose of the Bible is the formation of heavenly character. And therefore it would accustom men to the exercise of responsibility, that it may make them wary, and industrious, and self-dependent, and to be constantly developing the conscience. Such qualities as these, and a childlike, unprejudiced, teachable spirit, the Bible values more than knowledge, which, it says, "puffeth up." And, beyond question also, to gain such qualities, it is necessary to incur the danger of error. The case of St. Paul proves that, when a man gains such qualities, GOD will take care of his intellectual errors. Let his heart be right,—which means, among other things, let him be sincerely desirous of knowing the truth, and therefore, anxious, industrious, and teachable,—and all will be well with him—far better than if he were merely the correct theologian which the devil is.



him. Who was Nicodemus? A man of rank and power, and no doubt wealthy;<sup>1</sup>—although I do not trust mere tradition for the fact, any more than for other deliverances concerning him;—and, above all, of the exclusive, narrow-minded, extremely bigoted sect of the Pharisees; moreover, a Rabbi, and a member of the Sanhedrim; nay, more, the “master” or “teacher” of Israel. This title given him by our LORD seems evidently to refer to an office; and the very probable conjecture has been made,<sup>2</sup> that he was one of the three officers of the Sanhedrim, who were the President, the Vice-President, and “the Master,” *i. e.* “the Teacher.”<sup>3</sup> At all events the title shows that he was a man of great public estimation for character, learning, and talent. He was, moreover, an elderly man,<sup>4</sup> or at a period of life when men are apt to be timid, and conservative, and haters of novelties. When we put alongside of these environments the intense arrogance and exclusiveness of the governing classes of the church among the Jews of the period, we may realise somewhat the opposing influences and hostile prejudices against rivals in the public estimation, which this humble-minded man had had to overcome, when he

<sup>1</sup> John 19: 39.

<sup>2</sup> See Cunningham Geikie, *The Life and Words of Christ*, i., 481, Am. ed. He refers to “*Scholl*, quoted by *Lücke*, vol. i., p. 527.”

<sup>3</sup> Our Saviour’s words as given in the Greek make Nicodemus “*the teacher*.”

<sup>4</sup> I cannot agree with the supposition that he may have been the Nakdimôn Ben Goriôn of the Talmud, a work not written until centuries after Christ’s day. It seems to me (apart from the uncertain glamour of tradition about the contemporaneous existence of a young person of nearly the same name) that when Nicodemus styles himself “an old man,” or “old,” it is conclusive on the question of age. A young man would have been more likely to say “grown up.”



went to be instructed of one in the lower walks of life, and to acknowledge such an one as like himself a teacher, and with an even higher authority than his own. It was then, clearly, his superior broad-mindedness and humility of heart, as well as the miracles of which he presently speaks, but of which his fellow-rulers had heard just the same as he, which brought him to Jesus as to a teacher sent from God. And he was open to the further conviction also, showing his teachable spirit, nay, he seems to have suspected, that the divine mission of Jesus was to be even more than that of a teacher. With an evident receptivity of mind, therefore, and with an earnestly inquiring heart, did he begin his interview with the Saviour of men. It would certainly be a great help to me in what I have to say further on, if my readers should prove to be possessed of the same ability to overcome their prepossessions, and the same broad-minded love of the truth, come from what lowly source it will,<sup>1</sup> as was Nicodemus, whom it is the fashion to traduce.

§ 102. THE MORAL COURAGE OF NICODEMUS.—But the sacred narrative continues: “The same came unto Jesus by night.”<sup>2</sup> Nicodemus was a brave, good man; or he would not have come at all. Well known as he was, he would have taken no chances of compromising himself; nor, as would be very natural with one in his high position, would he have subjected himself to the scrutinising eyes of even the few whom he would be sure to meet with upon his visit. Had he been a timid

<sup>1</sup> That is to say, if their heavenly character should prove to be as far advanced.

<sup>2</sup> According to the greater number of the authorities, “came unto Him by night.”

man, but anxious to learn more of Jesus, yet, occupying the position which he did, he would either have overcome his desire, or, with a little more boldness, he would have sent for Jesus,<sup>1</sup> and concealed his anxiety while before men, under a show of mere curiosity, or under the pretext that he would take knowledge as a ruler of the kind of man who was disturbing the minds of the people. But he was not only a brave, but a wise, and just, and prudent man. Recognising the measure of influence which he possessed, for good or evil, and what would be the weight of his conspicuous example, he did what every wise, and just, and prudent man should do, and especially those of rank and authority. He inquired privately, before he condemned or espoused publicly; lest he should either condemn unjustly, or should lend his name in the public eye to that which should be condemned. That this was undoubtedly his motive is evidenced by the fact that when a public occasion arose on which it was in his power (humanly speaking) to be of service to Jesus, he boldly charged his fellow-rulers with being themselves breakers of law, because they were condemning before they had inquired. And point is lent to the matter, too, by the sacred narrative inserting of him, immediately before telling of his argument, the explanatory phrase, "he that came to Him by night."<sup>2</sup> His argument is, however, precisely that which a sensible man would have used on the occasion, and

<sup>1</sup> Inviting Him to a meal, perhaps, as did the Pharisee Simon, and attentively observing Him.

<sup>2</sup> John 7: 45-53. The r. v. substitutes "before" for "by night"; but the phrase has the support of MSS. A, D, 1, 69, 118, 124, 131, 157, 220, the Vulgate, etc.; and Griesbach inserts it in his text without an alternative reading.

the only one, under the circumstances, which was likely to be of use to Jesus. And he seems to have employed it with boldness, warmth, and vehemence; perhaps even telling them that he himself had done the very thing (as his argument certainly implied) which he was urging upon them; and, it may be, going still further, and acknowledging himself to have been convinced of the Messiahship of Jesus. If he did this, however, it was not wise, nor helpful to Jesus, although brave, and what at the time no one of the apostles would have dared openly to do before the great, hostile council of their rulers. Still, although he may not have gone so far as to lose his good judgment and tact,<sup>1</sup> and by the open avowal of his belief in Jesus have destroyed altogether his influence with his fellows, he unquestionably led them to infer that belief, and he was evidently very urgent and impassioned; for the council at once suspected his warm advocacy of the cause of Jesus to be not that of a mere impartial ruler, but of a genuine believer; and he in fact only averted the storm from his Master by bringing it upon himself. With bitter satire "they answered and said unto him (the official teacher of Israel), Art thou also of that<sup>2</sup> Galilee? Search, and see that out of that<sup>2</sup> Galilee ariseth no prophet." And the result was that the council broke up, "and they went every man to his own home."<sup>3</sup> All thanks to the wise, brave, prudent, and good Nicodemus!

§ 103. NICODEMUS' BRAVERY AT CRUCIFIXION.—  
Indeed, that Nicodemus was capable of braver things

<sup>1</sup> As some inconsiderately assert he ought to have done.

<sup>2</sup> Literally, "the Galilee"; the article here having a contemptuous fling.

<sup>3</sup> John 7: 45-53.

than many of the disciples before their special inspiration at Pentecost was once more manifested at the Crucifixion. At the council of chief priests, scribes, and elders, which condemned Jesus, Nicodemus was clearly not present. It was a hastily gathered assemblage at the break of day of the enemies of Jesus. We are expressly told of their unanimity,<sup>1</sup> and, of course, of the absence of every friend of Jesus. In the case of Joseph of Arimathea, for example, who was a councillor, it is particularly said by St. Luke<sup>2</sup> that he did not consent to their counsel and deed. And yet Joseph had not been so open and bold in his advocacy of the cause of Jesus as had been Nicodemus; for St. John says of Joseph expressly, that he was a disciple, "but secretly for fear of the Jews."<sup>3</sup> It was, we may well believe, only those who were avowed enemies who were hurried together; while the utmost care was taken that all those who were known to be friendly to Jesus, or who were uncertain, should know nothing of the matter.<sup>4</sup> In particular, Nicodemus, who had been so able an advocate against them on the previous occasion, would of all others be kept in the dark. In fact, as the council had no power to put anybody to death, it did not need to be formally assembled. It was considered by the conspirators of the highest importance to have the whole affair managed with the strictest secrecy, and hurried through, lest some dreaded opposition should arise; especially in view of the immense enthusiasm which had been stirred up for Jesus among the people

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 26: 65, 66; 27: 1. Mk. 14: 64; 15: 1. Luke 22: 66-71; 23: 1.

<sup>2</sup> Luke 23: 50, 51.

<sup>3</sup> John 19: 38.

<sup>4</sup> The express covenant with Judas stipulated for a betrayal in the absence of the multitude.

but a few days before. From what we know of the boldness of Nicodemus on every occasion where his name is mentioned, he would surely have been heard from had he been present at the council, or had had knowledge thereof. But the foreordination of God had fixed the time when Jesus was to give up His life,<sup>1</sup> and so His enemies were permitted to work their will. When therefore the end came, and timid apostles and other immediate followers (John, a somewhat influential acquaintance of the high priest<sup>2</sup> apparently, alone excepted) were keeping in the background, and His many friends, including the women, and even Mary Magdalene, or all but His mother, stood afar, two men of wealth and rank, Joseph of Arimathea and the brave Nicodemus, seem to have been the first to become boldly and openly active. Aware at last of what was going on, but too late to be of service in defence, so soon as the crucified, suffering Master was dead, they hastened to give to His body, at least, all the respect, reverence, and protection in their power. Oh, what respect, reverence, and protection in return to the memory of the worthy pair the rich should especially give! for if, indeed, it be hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven, here is the comfort of shining examples, which show that with God all things are possible. The brave Nicodemus has been abused over and over again by men all through the centuries, while less worthy men have been haloed as saints; but God has sainted him on high with the halo of eternal glory. Some critics have even strained a point, in order to discover a new circumstance, if possible, in the sacred narrative, which

<sup>1</sup> John 2: 4; 7: 6, 8, 30; 8: 20. Dan. 9: 26. Hag. 2: 7, 9; with Matt. 24: 2, 15, 28, 34.

<sup>2</sup> John 18: 15, 16.



might tally with their slighting ideas of Nicodemus; and they have imagined that they have found it in the bare fact that it chanced to be the more timid, but now brave, Joseph of Arimathea, who incidentally is mentioned first, when coupled with Nicodemus, in the story of the Entombment!<sup>1</sup> Of course one had to be first mentioned; for the critics could hardly expect an attempt at a round robin, and especially where there were but two to be named. And very naturally, in the order of the narrative, the one to whom attention is first drawn is Joseph; for he happened to be the possessor of the new tomb hewn out of a rock just by in a garden. To his lot therefore it fell to go boldly in to Pilate the Roman Governor, and get the necessary permission to take down the body of Jesus from the cross, and place it in the tomb, secure from the beasts and birds to which the bodies of those put to death as malefactors were usually exposed. But the two rich men had evidently concerted together as to what each should do; and while Joseph bought the linen cloth in which to wrap the sacred body, Nicodemus procured the costly hundredweight of rich spices. Emboldened by the rich men, "Mary Magdalene and the other Mary," and one or two additional friends of Jesus,—how many we do not know,—now gathered round, and while the women looked on, the body was laid in the tomb.

§ 104. UNQUESTIONABLE INTEGRITY OF NICODEMUS.  
—To me it is a matter of wonder that the brave and noble Nicodemus should have been made a target for the arrows of Christendom. But it illustrates how sheeplike in all things men are, or what is the natural

<sup>1</sup> John 19: 38-42.



tendency of the old man within us to be slavish and dependent, and to follow leaders, instead of always being in touch with our personal responsibility of thought and conscience. Even men of great learning and ability often fail to serve the cause of truth because of this overpowering tendency. They will not hear the one only Master, who would inculcate the necessity of learning to think for themselves, when He says, Call no man upon earth your "master," or authoritative "teacher," or "father."<sup>1</sup> In an indifferent, thoughtless way, the convenient, isolated phrase "came by night" was pounced upon, without pausing to consider what a fool, both in an earthly and a spiritual sense, Nicodemus would have been, if he had come by day. But it was a convenient text from which to evangelise, and all other texts of course had to be squared with the unjust assumption therefrom. And so they would hold Nicodemus to have been of weak and timid character, not only because he came by night in the first instance, but also because in the council that would have arrested Jesus, he did not become imprudent, any more than on the previous occasion; that is to say, because he did not use arguments and make avowals which would surely have brought about, if not his own, at all events the arrest and public humiliation, perhaps scourging, of our LORD, or the very things which the noble councillor was striving to prevent. Instead therefore of doing as ungrateful Christians would thoughtlessly have had him do, like the truly wise and brave man that he was, he both preserved his great influence for good with the council, and boldly hurled at its members the one wise and politic argument which broke it up, and sent every man helplessly home to his

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 23: 8-10.

own reflections. And so again, the same tendency to lower, if possible, our estimation of the character of the comer by night, manifests itself to an extreme degree on the third occasion when he is mentioned;—when, nevertheless, all that is said is worthy of the highest praise, and is calculated in particular to call forth our admiration of the man for his conspicuous courage; or for just that same characteristic spirit of bold determination in the performance of duty, which here also, as on the two previous occasions, shone forth with superior lustre, and which, one would suppose, could hardly fail of universal recognition. In this third instance, not knowing how else timidity could be even inferred, where there was conspicuously the bold resolution of inspiring leadership amid the timidity and confusion of the disciples of Jesus, his detractors assume him to have been emboldened by his fellow-councillor Joseph, or by one whose own natural timidity was such, that, unlike Nicodemus, he had made no show in the council in defence of Jesus, but, on the contrary, had shrinkingly kept his discipleship a profound secret up to this very time for fear of the Jews! But fortunately for Joseph, there had been no convenient text said of him about coming by night, to be seized upon for the prejudice-inspiring sermons and commentaries. And so, such an one, whose genuine timidity has been expressly declared to us, is unthinkingly assumed to have been the inspirer and leader of the bold Nicodemus! and on the miserable pretext that Joseph's name, as was most natural under the circumstances, happens to be the first one of the two that was mentioned by St. John, when he tells us in due order of the brave and honourable deeds of *both* councillors on occasion of the Entombment! For the learned, and

able, and godly commentators and biographers and preachers who have done these things let me acknowledge my cordial feelings of personal respect. But for their own high reputation's sake I wish that they at least could have emancipated themselves from the warping prejudices of early education, and not have thus compromised their exceedingly good judgments and warm love of justice by such remarkably strained arguments against the character of the noble Nicodemus. I am sure, upon reflection, they would be among the first to get out of this well-worn rut of thoughtless travel.

§ 105. THE NEW BIRTH.—For have they ever thought, indeed, that the one whom they thus disparage is the very first and only man whom Jesus early in His ministry chose to honour by imparting to him exclusively the great secret theretofore, and for some time thereafter, carefully concealed from the apostles themselves, namely, that He was to be crucified as a common malefactor for the sins of men? Think of it, oh! think of it, good, respected men, all; the man whom ye reproach, the man whom ye even go out of reason's broad highway in order to find some assumed cause for aspersing, is the one of all others whom Jesus honours with His most secret confidence! And perhaps it was even because Nicodemus was thus made aware beforehand of the coming catastrophe, and that it was sure to happen at last, and had had the knowledge of it so long before, even upon the word of Jesus Himself, that the blow, when it came, did not paralyse him, as it had done the greater number of the disciples. There were doubtless others present when the secret was told; but it was couched in such parabolic language, and was led

up to by such recondite reasoning, that only a keen and educated mind like that of Nicodemus would, before the event, have grasped its meaning. How many of us, indeed, with no previous knowledge of the crucifixion of Jesus, or education as to the wages of sin necessitating a new gift of life to the sinner through the life and death of Jesus, would have caught the drift of the declarations to Nicodemus, however emphasised;—such as, “Except a man be born again,” and, “of Water and the Spirit,” “he cannot see,” or, “enter into, the kingdom of God”? and again, that what is born of the Spirit is spirit, and of flesh only flesh? Through and behind such figures, how many of us would understand the explanation of Jesus, that when He spake of being born of Water, there was a spiritual meaning in the expression, referring to a Source of cleansing which was not to be found in material water, or in any works of the flesh?—a meaning of which Nicodemus “the teacher of Israel” ought to have been well aware: although, of course, he knew absolutely nothing about Christian baptism, which had not yet been instituted;—a meaning, therefore, up to which the Jewish scriptures had led, apart from Christian teaching?<sup>1</sup> How many of us would therefore realise, that no work of men, whether of baptism, or repentance, or faith, or conversion, could possibly cause us to be born again into a new Life? Even if dead men, that is, those not yet “born again,” could do such works, they could only produce results commensurate with human powers. They could not re-create Life. But indeed, when we regard men as still unredeemed from their non-existent state, and as absolutely wiped out of

<sup>1</sup> Luke 24: 25-27, 44-46; 4: 16-21; 16: 31. Acts 17: 2, 3; 18: 28.  
1 Pet. 1: 10-12. John 5: 39, 45-47.

existence, as is the sentence of the law upon sinners, where would be the workers to baptise or be baptised, or to repent, or believe, or be converted?<sup>1</sup> And if it was thus first necessary to have life restored to the dead, then, until the sinners had been "born again," what would be the use of a Teacher sent from God, as Nicodemus had suggested, seeing that, until the primary necessity had been supplied, there would in legal strictness be no persons to be taught, and no use in teaching them if there were? And how many of us, therefore, if altogether untutored in these fundamentals of Christian truth, and with only the parabolic word of Jesus before our minds, would have straightway caught the idea that the whole sinful world was to be "born again," or "from above" (as is the primary meaning of the Greek), and first, by an act of cleansing which should take away the sins of all, thus abolishing mortality; and next, by a new birth or re-creation of their spirits by the Spirit of God, who is the only Source of Life; like begetting like, and the Spirit of God begetting the child of God; which, of course, the flesh and matter could never do? And how many of us would have perceived, also, that the parabolic words

<sup>1</sup> In our reasoning as to a condition of things apart from a Redeemer and Justifier of sinners, we must not be confused because that condition has never in fact existed; for our reasoning takes into view what would be the strictly *normal* effect of the wages of Sin being Death in the absence of Grace, or what the Bible calls the state by nature; that is to say, as though the Lamb had *not* been "slain from the foundation of the world." (Rev. 13: 8.) In such case, evidently, all sinful life would be wiped out of existence; and so, there would be nothing left to restore existence, and cause the dead life to be "born again," but the Power of God working according to some method of Grace. In like manner, He alone must have become our Redeemer and Justifier *to preserve* in existence the forfeited lives of sinners.



were spoken of all who were needing to be "born again," and that upon all alike who had died under sin, the irrespective God would irrespectively bestow the Gifts of Life and Immortality, as freely and unconditionally as are all His gifts, or, as He intimates, is the coming and going of the wind? Indeed, how many of us have understood these parabolic expressions of Jesus to this very day, and their free, unconditional, and universal significance? Certainly, at the first, they were not understood by Nicodemus himself, for all that he was the master or teacher of Israel; and his thoughts had to be quickened, without using language which would have been intelligible to the others, until he had clearly grasped the heavenly design of giving Life for Death to man, and by a mode as all-reaching as is the free coming and going of the wind. And how many of us also, before the Crucifixion, when Nicodemus at last had caught the idea of the necessity of the new Life, and we had not, and that to give that new Life was the true mission of Jesus from God, would have understood the words in which Jesus told him, but apparently no others (so at least that they understood), that the new Life would follow upon the Son of man being lifted up, even as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,—that is, to save people from Death; and that to be thus lifted up, or to die upon the cross, the only begotten Son of God had been sent into the world?<sup>1</sup> He thus darkly showed to Nicodemus, that, as the children of men were a serpent-bitten race, so He, the Son of God, even the Manifester of God, and the only possible Redeemer and Justifier of men, had assumed the likeness of the serpent-bitten,

<sup>1</sup> Note: It is the reply of Jesus to the question why He had come from God.



to take upon Himself their sins, and die in their stead, and to die the very death by which at that time evil-doers were wont to die. It is probable that the expression of a man being "lifted up" was in common use among the people of our LORD'S time to indicate a death upon the cross, even as it is several times so used by our LORD Himself; and just as analogous expressions to indicate our modern modes of capital punishment are in common use among us; and of course, therefore, the expression would **have** been more intelligible to Nicodemus than to us.

§ 106. PURPOSE OF CHRIST IN OBSCURING HIS DEATH.—But although in this way Nicodemus was greatly aided in arriving at the meaning of our LORD'S parabolic language, and still more perhaps by significant gestures, and by greater amplitude of language than is recorded; still, we cannot but observe the purposed obscurity in which our LORD cloaks His ideas. He does not even use the first person, or speak avowedly of Himself, as the Son of GOD who was to do these things. But, notwithstanding, Nicodemus at the last very evidently gained an insight into His meaning; for he does not ask for further explanation; whereas all through the first part of the interview, he had been most pertinacious in his inquiries. Moreover, he in a measure implied by what he himself afterwards said, that when he had thus heard from our LORD in person, he had learned and understood what He was doing. His language was, "Doth our law judge the man, except it first hear from himself, and *know what he doeth?*"<sup>1</sup> And it was because, indeed, he knew who Jesus was, and what He was doing, that at the last he brought at

<sup>1</sup> John 7: 51.

the burial the hundredweight of spices in His honour, even while danger was near, and the immediate followers of Jesus, who had not been so responsive to instruction, had abandoned Him. To determine how little, beyond question, on the occasion of the interview, the disciples (if there were any present except St. John) understood what Jesus was saying, and in order to learn how long they were kept in ignorance of the great secret that their long-expected Messiah, who they were proudly hoping was to become a great worldly Prince, was to die as a malefactor, we will have to go to the sixteenth chapter of St. Matthew. In truth, it was in the last year of the ministry of Jesus, and while journeying to Jerusalem to die, and after He had performed almost all His most astounding miracles in their presence, including the suggestive, twice-repeated feeding of the perishing multitudes, all but compelling the disciples to realise His Divine Power, that He ventured at last to let them know, how, in order to burst open the gates of Hades into which sin was consigning our race, and to bring forth its great congregation,<sup>1</sup> He was

<sup>1</sup> Not "church," as we understand the word. *Ekklesia*, at the time our LORD was speaking in Matt. 16: 18, had never had that meaning in the whole history of the Greek language; and this text makes the very first occasion that, at the arbitrary will of men, it has been rendered "church." Its true meaning was always *congregation*, *assembly*, or *gathering*, and it was applicable to any kind of *gathering* or *body* of persons; as in Acts 19: 32, 39, 41, where it is three times applied to a pagan "assembly"; and here, where it means the great "gathering" of the dead in Hades. That is to say, in Matt. 16: 18, Jesus promises that the gates of Hades, in consequence of His death and resurrection, should not "prevail" against His creatures assembled therein, to keep them in the cold embrace of Death. In fact, in every example of the word in the N. T. it might better, and with greater clearness to the reader, have been translated *congregation* or *congregations*. In those instances where it was applied to a *body* or *bodies* or the whole *body* of Chris-

then going to Jerusalem; or on no errand of worldly conquest, but to bear suffering from the ruling classes, and finally to be put to death.<sup>1</sup> What was St. Peter's astonishment and even stupefaction on then, for the first, learning plainly of the terrible necessity of Jesus' death to give life to those who were otherwise the irrevocable victims of Hades, and would be for ever congregated within its gates! And yet, he and the others, under the skilful hand of the Master, for over two years, not only in miracle, but in parable and allegoric explanations and actions, had had the truth suggested to them over and over again; so that it is even wonderful that some of them did not understand. But it was only, in fact, after the Resurrection, when the Spirit brought all things to their remembrance, that they perceived what had been the general drift of the teaching of Jesus. It was to the keener and more educated mind of Nicodemus, therefore, that Jesus first saw fit, in parabolic language, to tell of the lamentable manner in which His earthly career would close, and how He would thus save the world from Death, or cause it to be born again. The duller, illiterate minds of the disciples may have heard the words of the mystic dialogue between our LORD and Nicodemus, but in them the dialogue only bore

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tians, so to translate would have conformed the better to the usage as to the elder church, which in the O. T. is styled "the *congregation* of the LORD." As plain "congregation," the reader would the easier discern when, as in Matt. 16: 18, and the Epistle to the Ephesians, etc., the word *ekklesia* has a universal, instead of an ecclesiastical sense. In theological writings after the N. T., however, the word came to be used almost, if not altogether, in the ecclesiastical sense, to the great prejudice of our judgment in the interpretation of the scriptures, and even causing such words as *ecclesiastic* and *ecclesiastical* to be therefrom derived.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 16: 16-21.

fruit when afterwards they were inspired of the Spirit.<sup>1</sup> Then indeed we learn from the very apostle who narrated the interview of Nicodemus with Jesus the meaning of the Master's parabolic words. Says St. John:

"This is He that came through Water and Blood, (even) Jesus Christ; not in the Water only, but in the Water and the Blood. . . . For there are Three who bear witness (*i. e.* to the Gift to us of Life), the Spirit, and the Water, and the Blood: and the Three are in the One. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater. . . . And this is the witness, that God hath given us Eternal Life, and this Life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath the Life."<sup>2</sup>

Thus at length did the apostle interpret the parable, which, when first uttered, required the mind of Nicodemus to understand. For "the Water and the Blood," St. John declares, are in our LORD. That is, they denote respectively His divine and human natures, by which, and by the Spirit, also in Him, we were all begotten into Life. In full accord with this explanation the acute mind of Nicodemus had earlier been led to discern the high spiritual character of the Water, and the birth therefrom, or "from above," of which Jesus had told him. In truth, the very coupling of the Water with the Spirit, and in a Life-creating sense, aided by the emphatic explanatory remarks which followed, were well calculated to show to one of keen perceptions, who was well versed in the sacred writings, that the use of the term was intended to veil to a degree the assertion of a divine personality; or that the Speaker

<sup>1</sup> See the subsequent repetitions of 16: 21, and how little they were realised, in 17: 22, 23; 26: 2, 20-29, 51, 56. Luke 24: 20-35, etc.

<sup>2</sup> 1 John 5: 6, 8, 9, 11, 12.

was not a mere teacher come from GOD, but, instead, was verily "the Fountain of Life,"—the Water of His parable, of which all men are necessarily born; and that to re-beget men into Life He had descended from High Heaven, and become Man, even flesh and "blood"; that, being "lifted up," He might draw all men unto Him, and endow them with eternal Life.<sup>1</sup>

§ 107. THE SUPERNATURALNESS OF CHRISTIANITY.—  
But some one may inquire, If Nicodemus was all that I have said, and our LORD paid such a lofty tribute to his character, why did He not also make him one of His immediate disciples, and select him rather than the duller and more timid and easily disconcerted Peter for the honour of beginning the work of the new church on the day of Pentecost? The question is easily answered by the sacred page itself. Says St. Paul:

"GOD hath chosen the foolish things of the world, that He might put to shame the wise; and GOD hath chosen the weak things of the world, that He might put to shame the things that are strong; and the base (or, better, *low-born*) things of the world, and the things which are despised hath GOD chosen, (yea,) and the things which are not, that He might bring to nought (or, *leave altogether unemployed*<sup>2</sup>) the things which are: that no flesh should glory before GOD. But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus; who has been made unto us wisdom from GOD,—both righteousness and sanctification, (that is, His righteousness has been made our justification before GOD) and redemption; that, according

<sup>1</sup> And when perfected in belief, with eternal life in the highest sense. John 3: 13-15; 12: 32. *I. e.*, they should no more continue "perishing," but be wholly blest.

<sup>2</sup> This seems to me to be the true, as it is the normal idea of the compound Greek verb.



as it is written, He that boasteth, let him boast in the LORD. And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom declaring unto you the testimony<sup>1</sup> of GOD. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men, but in the power of GOD."<sup>2</sup>

§ 108. WEALTH AS A BAR TO CHRISTIANITY.—In other words, Christianity was to be proved to men to be a supernatural religion by its supernatural progress, without any extrinsic or adventitious aid from men of power, or rank, or talent, or learning, or great natural courage, or wealth. Nicodemus possessed all these, and was therefore, as likewise from age, altogether ineligible as an apostle, or as a help to the cause of the gospel. Indeed, there was another told of in the Gospels, who possessed only one of these disqualifications, namely, wealth; but who was young, zealous, and able to bear hardship, while Nicodemus was old. And the young man was of unexceptionable morality; and Jesus loved him, and would gladly have had him for His disciple. But, of course, here also the wealth stood in the way. And so, when Jesus looked with pleasure upon his physical and inestimable moral qualifications, and perceived his anxiety to do the will of GOD that he might speedily attain the eternal life of heaven, He desired to have the one only obstacle, that of wealth, removed. We read:

<sup>1</sup> Or, as the r. v. says, "the mystery," following A., C., and other ancient authorities.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. 1: 27 to 2: 5.



“And Jesus looking upon him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and<sup>1</sup> follow me. And his countenance fell at the saying, and he went away sorrowful: for he was one that had great possessions. And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto His disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God!”<sup>2</sup>

Poor young man! What a glorious opportunity he missed of being one of Christ's immediate followers, and becoming perhaps another St. Paul! But his wealth was the insuperable obstacle; and he could not give it up. And yet, because Jesus loved him, I love his memory, and feel in my soul that he has been judged too harshly by men. He did not have the revelation as yet which we have, that the One who bade him give up his wealth was the LORD Himself. And for that matter, how much of our wealth, if we have a superabundance, do we yield up to the poor, and sick, and needy; and how much personal attention do we give to the cause of the Master? The disciples themselves had not realised as yet who their Master really was; and Jesus had even gently chidden the young man for giving Him a title which he should know properly belonged only to God; or at least, had markedly inquired why the title was given. For the Godhead of the Master was too mighty

<sup>1</sup> The r. v., after many high ancient authorities, omits *take up the cross, and*; and perhaps, the position of the words in the Greek, after, as it were, the sentence is completed, further justifies the omission. For the Greek thus reads: “and come, follow me—having taken up the cross”; as though the words were a marginal comment added to the text. But the words are in A. etc., and are admitted by Griesbach into his text.

<sup>2</sup> Mk. 10: 17-27.

a secret to be indiscriminately told, and, like the other of the coming death, was screened from general knowledge. The former secret would in general have been too coercive of the free-will of men; while the latter might have driven from Jesus the very followers whom He was so carefully educating into higher knowledge.

§ 109. THE RICH YOUNG MAN.—And yet both secrets seem to have been communicated to the noble Nicodemus, who had taken such voluntary pains to seek a private interview with Jesus, and ascertain who He really was; and who had so come to Him because, upon the evidence which all possessed, he had recognised His divine mission. It was an honouring recognition of the old man's openness of heart, courage of conviction, sincerity, and zeal, seeing that Jesus, notwithstanding the great merits of Nicodemus, might not, consistently with the Divine Purpose, have chosen him for a personal follower. And we can readily see what an emboldening influence the knowledge would thereafter have had upon Nicodemus; even as it really did, both at the council and at the Entombment of Jesus. But while rendering justice to Nicodemus, let us not, as so many also do, judge too harshly the rich young man, who, like the disciples themselves, was not thus specially honoured. That Jesus loved him, and would have had him qualify himself to become a personal follower, or one of His disciples, proves his noble character, and that he had, as he said, tried with great success to do his duty from his youth. How many of us can say as much? Nay, more: what one among us, with all our belief in the Son of GOD, can in a moment give up all that we have of earthly possession? If it be a question of faith, surely the young

man's faith, as demonstrated by his life, was greater than that to which most of us can lay claim. Oh that we could realise with St. James how little distinction there is between our faith and our other deeds! And observe: Of the young man it was said, "*One* thing thou lackest." How, indeed, should we rejoice, if of us it could be said, there was but *one* thing *we* lacked, even if that one thing were the inability to surrender all that we had! and especially as the great majority of us have that inability in full measure already, and many other imperfections besides. But with us it is, fortunately, not indispensable to the Divine Purpose, as at the beginning, that the preachers of the gospel should not retain their wealth. Rather, we consider ourselves fortunate, if we can secure a minister who is possessed of wealth; for it saves us the necessity of diving too deeply into our own pockets. The young man was not perfect; and still less are we; and the imperfect man may not enter heaven. But if, because of his imperfection, we dare to consign him to hopeless torments, what is to become of ourselves, who are not only not so good, but are even reckless enough to sneer at that pure morality which Jesus loved? Judge not then, "that ye be not judged."

§ 110. RICH MEN OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.—Let us group the rich men who became believers in Jesus: Nicodemus, and the young man,—it may be, partly, to save his name from vituperation that it has not been given,—and Joseph of Arimathea,<sup>1</sup> and Zaccheus.

<sup>1</sup> If, as is not unlikely, the young man and Joseph of Arimathea are the same, we would have one more of the innumerable, suggestive groupings of *three* persons or things in the Bible, to tell us, as do also the innumerable number of them in the natural world,

Though not rich myself,<sup>1</sup> I must confess, I love the memories of these rich men of the New Testament. And what a comfort they should be to the rich men of the present age! those whose riches, in turn, make it so hard for them to fight the battle of pure morality, unselfishness, and love; and who yet, in general, have not so great obstacles to encounter as had these four soldiers of GOD in intolerant, exclusive Judæa of old. Oh, if our spiritual eye could be opened, how in all likelihood might we see all four among the great multitude which no man can number,<sup>2</sup> or should attempt to limit!—the young man having learned at last to value his wealth as an ugly dream of the night of battle which is past; and all four having personally built at length, as required, their several perfect Superstructures of Works, through faith and hope and love, upon that Foundation of Righteousness which was laid by the Faith and Hope and Love of GOD in the Person of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. Then might we also learn to love the moral man, as Jesus did, instead of sneering at him, or setting up ourselves to judge him, as though he had no faith in GOD, or part in Christ, or in the new Life which Christ has wrought out *in behalf of all men alike*; and as though GOD no longer rewarded deeds of righteousness, or called that faith which moved to such deeds the heathen harlot Rahab, or the sensual Samson, or the benighted, cruel, unnatural Jephthah!<sup>3</sup> And perhaps we may learn to realise also that we ourselves, whether from this life

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of the three necessary salvations to man's perfection. But if there are *four* rich men, then is their number a special sermon to every rich man in all the four quarters of the earth.

<sup>1</sup> Or my chief book would have been published more than a quarter of a century ago, instead of being still in manuscript.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. 7: 9.

<sup>3</sup> Heb. 11: 1, 31, 32.

or the next,<sup>1</sup> shall never enter the celestial city, although its gates *in every direction* are always open,<sup>2</sup> until our own morality, keeping all the time equal pace with our faith, shall be the perfect result of a perfect faith. For to the last there shall in no wise enter into that city any common<sup>3</sup> (*i. e.* unclean) thing, or he that committeth an abomination or a lie;<sup>4</sup> and never will there come a time that *our* faith can possibly become a substitute for *our* uncleanness.

§ III. THE COURTESY OF NICODEMUS.—With some better appreciation, therefore, I trust, of the character of Nicodemus, than that which the injustice of men has been wont to exhibit, let us, with the unprejudiced eye that I have desired, proceed with the consideration of his interview with Jesus. We read: “The same came unto Him by night, and said to Him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a Teacher come from GOD: for no man can do these proof-signs that thou doest, except GOD be with him.” In thus, at the start, giving unto Jesus an authoritative title which was held in especial honour among his nation, we discern the courtesy which distinguished Nicodemus. Not one of the Pharisees, except him, is recorded as having ever addressed Jesus by this title. And yet he says, “Rabbi, *we* know that thou art a Teacher come from GOD.” That is to say, there were others, notwithstanding, among the upper classes, who recognised the *divine authority* of Jesus as a *Teacher*, and who doubtless, therefore, were accustomed to ascribe to Him among themselves the title

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 12:32.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. 21:13, 25. “GOD is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to Him.” Acts 10:34, 35.

<sup>3</sup> The literal Greek.

<sup>4</sup> Rev. 21:27.



of "Rabbi." And since Nicodemus was thus positive of the divine authority of Jesus as a Teacher, because of the supernatural proof-signs, he was of course fully prepared to admit also whatever Jesus should teach. This was a great step gained, and put him at once in an humble, deferential, and receptive attitude before our LORD throughout the interview, and eager to understand and have thoroughly explained all that Jesus should say. In other words, he was an ideal seeker after truth, and just the one that is favoured, or, more strictly, rewarded, of GOD. Moreover, the manner of this introductory admission that Jesus was a Teacher specially sent from GOD, and had the proof-signs of the fact, carried with it the implication that He might be something more, and was evidently a sort of tentative question put to ascertain what that something more might be. As though he had said, We know thus much at least of thy most extraordinary, supernatural character, but how much more thou art we know not; and it is expressly to learn who thou really art, and for what great purpose thou art come from GOD to men, and what are thy divine claims upon us, that I am here;—even in the quietude of the night, when there are no distractions to prevent my gaining the fuller and clearer explanation.

§ 112. NICODEMUS INSPIRED WITH WONDER.—Thus far then the narrative shows that the wonderful proof-signs of a divinely authorised mission which Jesus was exhibiting had confessedly aroused the old man's expectant wonder; and that expectant wonder must beyond question <sup>1</sup> have been emphasised by the most extraordinary proclamations concerning

<sup>1</sup> John 1: 19. Matt. 3: 7.



Jesus of John the Baptist, whose character as a great national prophet had been generally recognised. For while all classes were paying the most profound attention and reverence to John as a veritable messenger from GOD, and were filled with admiration of his saintly, austere, and unselfish character, he had astonished them by pointing out Jesus as by far the more lofty Being, whose very shoe's latchet he himself was unworthy so much as to unloose; and by declaring that as His mere forerunner, sent for the purpose, he was pointing Him out; that, indeed, all the daily sacrifices in the temple for hundreds of years pointed to Him; for that in Him they beheld the true "Lamb of GOD which taketh away the sin of the world"; and that he, John, had seen the spirit descending upon Him like a dove, and knew, by previous intimation from GOD, that He was the One who baptiseth not with water, like himself, but with the Holy Ghost, and with fire; hence that to Him belonged the fan which was purging the chaff from the wheat,<sup>1</sup> and to Him also the wheat itself; and that His was the heavenly garner into which His wheat when purged should be gathered; and that He also was the thorough Consumer of the chaff which would be separated therefrom; and that the fire in which He did this was unquenchable. Plainly, therefore, to thinkers like Nicodemus John had proclaimed that Jesus was one and the same with GOD Himself, and the great Judge of all the earth; and John had even said also in express words, that could be understood of all, that He was the long-expected Messiah, yea, the Son of GOD!<sup>2</sup> All these veritable announcements, and

<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, the old man from the new.

<sup>2</sup> JOHN 1: 19-34. So Matt. 3 chap. Mk. 1: 1-11. Luke 3: 2-18.

doubtless many less authentic reports, were circulating; and these, along with the common expectation at the time of the coming of the Messiah, were well calculated to gladden the heart of the noble Nicodemus with wonderful anticipations, which even the recognition of Jesus as a Teacher come from GOD, or as being like one of the old prophets, did not evidently satisfy.

§ 113. PURPOSE OF PARABOLIC FORM OF TEACHING. —Jesus perceived of course the earnestness of the request made of Him by the anxious old man as to the true nature of His divine mission, and rewarded it with a direct answer; but, because of those around, the answer was couched in such parabolic form that even the educated intellect of the talented Nicodemus was not equal to its comprehension. "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, *Except a man be born again* (or, *anew*, or, *from above*; for the Greek word has all these senses, and preferably the last), he cannot see the kingdom of God." It is not wonderful that Nicodemus did not understand; for the ablest Christians are not agreed as to the meaning to this day.<sup>1</sup> Some of them suppose that Jesus tells us of the necessity of conversion or of a change of heart; as though to give a mere message, which, too, everybody already knew, was a sufficient reason for the divine errand of Jesus, and of the wondrous proofs and attendant circumstances thereof! Indeed, those also who deny the atonement are very fond of talking in some such simple manner, and would even, as an actual fact, make of Jesus a mere ethical *teacher!*

<sup>1</sup> Nay, they do not even understand that Nicodemus had asked a question, and that Jesus was making answer thereto; and are puzzled why the writer of the Gospel should say, "Jesus answered."

But, as St. Paul declares,<sup>1</sup> even the pagans knew the necessity of loving and obeying the righteous God just as well as we; and it certainly did not need the Son of God to descend from heaven to tell us only that. All the old prophets had said it again and again. And it must not be forgotten that the object of the remark of Nicodemus was to learn the *special* mission of Jesus from God;—that is, whether He was simply a Teacher, like as were the old prophets, or (as the inquirer seems to have believed) something more;—and that it was this particular desire of His interviewer which Jesus was answering. Surely the *special* mission of Him who came to take away the sin of the world, and thus redeem it from Death and justify it unto Life, was not merely to tell men that they must be converted, or, in general, to be a Teacher! If such only constituted the special reason of His coming, why not, pray, have sent again a prophet? Or, in particular, why did not the mission of John the Baptist suffice? for he, indeed, was preaching repentance at the very time. And, verily, in order to manifest with all plainness the necessity of repentance, and that the coming of the Messiah, bringing the Salvation of sinners from Death, was not a Salvation from Judgment, John was solemnly declaring that, even though Jesus should become thus the Giver of Life, He would notwithstanding surely put the axe to the very root of the trees, and would burn the chaff of wickedness<sup>2</sup> out of men with unquenchable fire; that instead therefore of looking for His coming in the easy, self-seeking, and self-contented manner that they were doing, as though they had nothing to fear from His Ad-

<sup>1</sup> Rom. 1: 18-20.

<sup>2</sup> "The old man," or sinfulness, or the unpardonable sin.

vent, but everything to make them happy, they should rather be fleeing from the wrath to come, and bringing forth fruits meet for repentance; and that that was the only proper way to prepare for the coming of the LORD, and of the unpardoning Holy Spirit whom He should send to them; in short, that they must realise His coming not to be to send peace to them, not even the peace of death, but a sword! Thus the teaching of John was, that in the place of the Death from which Jesus was to deliver men, there would be substituted a Second sort of Death, or the strictest possible æonic judgment according to their respective deeds; and that to indicate all this, he, John, was baptising them with material, cleansing water; thus making baptism by water the warning sign that the Messiah's awful personal baptising would not be a merely symbolic sign, like the human ceremony that the forerunner was performing, but would be, verily, along with the Gift of Life, a full judgment upon all sin and upon every sinner, even with the Holy Ghost and with fire.

§ 114. JOHN'S CONCEPTION OF CHRIST'S MISSION.— Evidently John made a wide distinction between his own mission to bring sinners to repentance and conversion, and that of Jesus. For not only in express terms did he point Jesus out as the Messiah and the Son of God, but he also represented His mission as so supernatural, exclusive, and important, that it even of itself necessitated no less than the awful, incomprehensible descent of the Son of God from His throne in Heaven. No suggestion of giving emphasis to so plain a duty as that of conversion is enough to account for such a superhuman mission

in the slightest degree; and to represent Jesus as answering Nicodemus that *that* was *the* object of His mission, when He really came to give Life to the world, is utterly unworthy of the occasion. What, indeed, had John and the old prophets left unsaid, to bring the necessity of repentance home to us? And are not even the heathen, who have received no such emphatic messages, said, nevertheless, to know well this necessity, and in their evil deeds therefore to be inexcusable? <sup>1</sup> Nay, are not our daily judgments all the time giving the matter tremendous emphasis, making the whole world inexcusable? And is not the very attempt to substitute the faith of sinners for the deeds of the righteous believer, as men so glibly do, daring audacity before the GOD, the unchangeable GOD, who keeps incessantly sending His judgments, notwithstanding the faith; and, too, upon the so-called believers and the unbelievers *just alike*? Surely, if greater emphasis were all that was required, it could have been given in some awful, supernatural, universally striking manner, rather than by the appearance of the Son of GOD as a man, and a poverty stricken man at that! No! the mission of the Son of GOD was not to be a mere ethical Teacher; and from what little even Nicodemus knew of Jesus, he had too much sense than so to think. And observe: our LORD was speaking of the necessity of a new birth on the part of men, or of something which Nicodemus truly said was out of man's power to obtain; and Jesus was telling of this necessity in answer to the old man's inquiry as to the purpose of His divine mission. The inference therefore is, that He had come to do for men what they could not possibly do for themselves; for

<sup>1</sup> Rom. 1: 20.



a new birth means of course an entrance into a new Life; so that even if Jesus had not thereafter expressly declared His mission to be to give Life to the perishing world, we might properly infer that such was the meaning of His declaration of the necessity of a new birth to man.

§ 115. BAPTISM AND NEW BIRTH.—But others again suppose that our LORD was speaking of a regeneration by baptism; those, namely, who are specially given to attaching superior importance to the visible, and to outward, material things in religion, and who are not content to regard the divinely appointed sacraments both as outward signs and memorials of that which has been done for man by the free gift or Grace of God, and also, when faithfully followed up, as means of special, non-compelling grace or help to the recipient. Their view of our LORD's words, however, is even more untenable than is the other; and not only because it is not large enough in its scope, or not a sufficient recognition of the great work of Him who is "the Life of *the world*," or the Redeemer of all men from Death, and whose great and special mission from God was by no means merely to give Life to the baptised; but because there are the same reasons against their view as against the other; and because also it would represent our LORD as doing a very foolish and unjust thing. It would make Him directly afterwards to remonstrate with, if not reprove, Nicodemus for not understanding Him, when more fully He repeats His declaration, at a time when, if He had really spoken of baptism, and the necessity of a new birth thereby, not a man on earth could possibly have understood Him, no, nor in all likelihood, even an angel in heaven. For that



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matter no one can possibly understand the necessity of a new birth *by a sacrament* any more at this day than in the time of Nicodemus; however much, independently of sacraments, we may readily perceive *the necessity itself* of our new birth into Life, after all Life had been forfeited by sin, and we were as though dead under the normal operation of the law of God. The bare necessity is easily perceived. And we can perceive also that the new birth must be effected, first, by the washing away of the sin, and the consequent removal of its penalty, and next, by a re-creation into Life, through the agency of the Spirit of God as the great and only Life-Giver. And Nicodemus, "the teacher of Israel," who knew full well the wages of sin, could have understood this much as well as we, and should, indeed, have done so. And in fact, in accord with all this Jesus tells Nicodemus at once, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We are speaking of what we know, and testifying of what we have seen." But was it reasonable to have expected of him to understand regeneration *by baptism*? Was that what he had known and seen? Do, pray, let us use our common sense in this matter. Surely, whether regeneration *by baptism* be a truth or a falsehood, at all events Nicodemus, even more than ourselves, is blameless for not understanding its necessity, when we also to this day do not. For remember, at the time, Jesus had not yet fulfilled His divine mission, and the important Christian sacrament of baptism, which was to become typical of His death and resurrection, and of His washing away in His blood the sins of the world, had not yet been instituted, and of it nobody had even heard.

§ 116. BAPTISM BEFORE THE RESURRECTION.—The only baptism which at that time was in use was the baptism unto repentance;<sup>1</sup> a baptism which by the descending dove made manifest the Person of Christ;<sup>2</sup> which also indicated or set forth the necessity of the works of men, or of conversion, and was preparatory to the public Advent of Christ; and which, therefore, because it told of that covenant of the law which *He alone was to keep*, and of which, accordingly, He assumed the obligations, nevertheless, with that supernatural consistency which pertains to all that Jesus did, He never personally administered. It was a baptism, indeed, which, apart from Christ, told of Death; and even with Him, as we have seen, of the Second Death. But the baptism which told of Life could only be properly instituted after Jesus had died and risen from the dead, and when the Gates of Heaven were about to open to receive Him as Death's great and only possible Conqueror.<sup>3</sup> The delay in its institution until after the resurrection was all-important, in truth; that so thereafter the sacrament might become a perpetual sign, first, that the Gates of Hades have been broken for all the great congregation of the dead, and that those Gates should be no more all-prevailing;<sup>4</sup> and, next, that the Gates of Heaven also, after receiving Jesus as the first-fruit from the dead, should continue thenceforth always open in every direction, to gather in the mighty harvest of the redeemed which should follow,<sup>5</sup> as fast as from time to time, under the power

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 3: 33.

<sup>2</sup> John 1: 31-34.

<sup>3</sup> For the Gates of Hades must first lose their prevailing power, before the Gates of Heaven could be open to men, and the Messiah's Work be accomplished.

<sup>4</sup> Matt. 16: 18.

<sup>5</sup> Rev. 21: 13, 24-27. Is. 43: 1-7.

of binding and loosing given to the redeemed themselves,<sup>1</sup> perfection in each individual case should be obtained. A third all-important reason will be given in the next section. That accordingly Jesus Himself never baptised with water<sup>2</sup> evinces (in thus carefully refraining from imposing upon others a ceremony, which before the resurrection was only symbolic of the covenant of the law) that it was not His *special* mission to preach repentance and the necessity of a new or converted heart, or in any wise to be a Teacher; although, of course, as was meet in Him who came to honour the law,<sup>3</sup> He was particularly careful, on the one hand, to declare the awful need for men to repent and turn unto God, and on the other, as their Representative, undertaking to fulfil the law in their stead, was Himself baptised. In submitting to baptism, therefore, although He thus made Himself a Teacher by example, nevertheless, like others who were baptised, His primary idea was in His own Person to fulfil to perfection the law of righteousness.<sup>4</sup> And in His case He was specially doing this in the stead and on the behalf of all men, as an essential part of that necessary work of universal redemption and justification which required the law to be fulfilled both as to its righteousness and its penalty; and which demanded, therefore,

<sup>1</sup> That is, including, in respect of one another, of hindering and aiding. How little many dream, that the power thus given to Peter was representative of what has been given to each one, even the humblest soul; and yet, only two chapters after (Matt. 18), it is explicitly shown, and shown to be for the benefit of one another. And it is a fearful responsibility, moreover, as illustrated by the parable of the unforgiving creditor in connection therewith.

<sup>2</sup> John 4: 2.

<sup>3</sup> Is. 42: 21. "It pleased the LORD, for His righteousness' sake, to magnify the law, and make it honourable" (r. v.)

<sup>4</sup> Matt. 3: 13-17.

on the part of the great Substitute for sinful man, a perfect Life, quite as much as a penal Death.

§ 117. BAPTISM AFTER THE RESURRECTION.—There is a third all-important reason why the institution of baptism should have been deferred until after the redemption and justification of men had been procured. For baptism had always been the symbol of a covenant of repentance, denoting the duty of men to be perfect or clean. Its institution accordingly by our LORD after His resurrection, and His own work was done, was an explicit declaration to men that, although they were redeemed and justified, they were in no wise absolved from the duty of obedience to the whole moral law, but were expressly to undertake to keep that law, and in the full belief that they would be judged by Himself according to their deeds. Thus by the administration of the sacrament to each one of us in turn we are, as it were, personally told by Himself, that He did not die to take away our *Sinfulness* by any *compulsory*, so-called Grace, and that for any such removal thereof there can for ever be *no sacrifice*; but that it remains for each individual in all future time to work out his own salvation therefrom, and to fear and tremble before an unpardoning GOD in respect thereof, until he shall have attained to that perfect love which keeps all the commandments of GOD, and, so keeping, has no longer cause for fear. Hence baptism, as instituted after the resurrection, symbolises all three salvations, but in different fashion. First, it is given to us as a sign that the *mortal* taint of sin has been, verily, already washed away by the blood of Jesus, and the Gates of Hades burst open by His resurrection; or that all men have been by Him, and

by Him only, saved from Death. And next, in view of its previous significance, and being thus given to us *subsequent* to His own great work, it is made the further sign, that the work of Christ has not obviated the necessity for man to attain unto perfection by his own works; or that the Sinfulness, under which we still labour, has of course not been done away by our LORD, but remains as unpardonable as ever; and, in consequence, that our Salvation therefrom depends upon ourselves. That is to say, baptism is a sign that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from *all* sin; and that from the *mortal* taint this has already been done as an act of Grace, without the works of man; and that in all other respects it is done upon true and perfect repentance; so that there is no longer the old, abolished Death for *any sin whatever*, unpardonable or otherwise, but in its place, for unpardonable sin, the Second Death of Judgment according to deeds. Finally, baptism, being our LORD's last visible legacy to us, previously to becoming the Leader of His innumerable host into heaven, is thus made in the third place a sign that the Gates of Heaven also have been opened, or a sign of our immediate Salvation from Suffering, so soon as the Salvation from Sinfulness shall have been effected. It is easy to be seen, that an earlier institution by our LORD of Christian baptism would have thrown all this into confusion, and robbed the sacrament of its threefold significance; and the more so, if our LORD had personally baptised. For should we then have seen so clearly, first, what is intimated by that careful refraining from baptising;<sup>1</sup> or, next, in the sacrament, as instituted after atonement for men had been made, what He has done on the

<sup>1</sup> To wit, that it was His works, and not ours, which should recover from Death.



one hand, and on the other what is required of ourselves; or, thirdly, how that for Sinfulness, notwithstanding His atoning Sacrifice, even as our daily experience of His subsequent Coming in Judgment is continually showing, there is *no pardon*? And who does not see, that in this matter of judgment upon the sinful, it makes no difference how much we think or call ourselves believers? Rather, judgment seems to begin, as it were, at the house of God, and the believers among sinful men to experience it even more heavily than the coarser natures around them. But if so, in view of the irrespective nature of the justice of God, as thus inexorably manifested, what at last must be the terrors of the future for those who persist in their Sinfulness?<sup>1</sup>

§ 118. PLACE OF BAPTISM IN THE CHRISTIAN SYSTEM.—In reserving, then, the institution of Christian baptism by our LORD until after His redeeming work was completed, His evident purpose was to show the proper place of baptism by water in the Christian system to be *after* men had been *first made alive*,—that is, *regenerated*,—by Himself; that is to say, in the order of time, *after* He Himself had duly fulfilled for us the law of righteousness, and made His great sacrifice and propitiation for sin, and thus first Himself *restored all men to Life* by taking away the normal penalty of sin;—in short, *after* He had *abolished* Death, and thereby caused the whole world *to be born again into a new Life*, and purchased for them the Gift of the Spirit; that thus, as real, living, moral beings, they might indeed be capacitated to repent, believe, and be baptised. It is the marvellous harmony of the Bible in all its minute, complicated, and desultory details, which demonstrates

<sup>1</sup> 1 Pet. 4: 12-19.



its testimony to be supernatural. And so, with the same undeviating, superhuman harmony, because *to all* Life was given, not only did Jesus thus reserve the institution of baptism until *for all* the Life was gained, but then also, most consistently, He commanded its suggestive administration *to all* the redeemed; that unto all it might tell of the special Work and Grace of GOD in Christ, unassisted meritoriously by men.<sup>1</sup> And how beautifully and unmistakably it tells of this, when administered as a manifest Work of Grace to the *helpless* infant! And yet, for the very reason that it tells of the Work of Christ, it is properly denied to those of responsible years who do not believe in Him and His Work, and who will not undertake to rear their own Superstructure of Works upon the Foundation by Him laid. For the Christian system requires faith and sincerity of all things, and will not suffer any trifling with its sacred truths; or that its solemn ceremonies should be used superstitiously as heathen talismans;—that is, as though they themselves had a compulsory power, virtue, or efficacy, independently of the will of the recipient.<sup>2</sup> Apart, however, from requiring due earnestness and reverence in the administration of the

<sup>1</sup> I take occasion here to say, that in Heb. 9: 14 we should render "*apart from* dead works"—"how much more shall the blood of Christ . . . cleanse your conscience (*i. e.*, justify you, make you righteous), *apart from* dead works, to serve the living God." See 1 Pet. 3: 21.

<sup>2</sup> How natural is such superstition is shown by the Faith-curists or "Christian Science" people of our own day, who have a book by the mere reading of which they declare men *without faith* may be physically healed! We can hardly look for consistency, however, among those who spurn remedies for the renewal of health to the diseased *natural* body, merely because the remedies belong to the kingdom of *nature*, and yet daily eat and drink the nutriment of *nature's* providing, to preserve that body in health and vigour!

divinely appointed sacrament, it would never do to vitiate or obscure the great Life-giving Work of Christ by causing a baptism *by or of men* to become the regenerating instrument which must be superadded to His Work to make it complete and effectual, and thus to give Life to themselves! Indeed, so far as the sacred record shows, and moreover implies, the first apostles of our LORD<sup>1</sup> never received Christian baptism;<sup>2</sup> and yet, will any one say, of the eleven at least, that in the true, scriptural sense *they* were not regenerated or "born again"? It is enough that the institution of Christian baptism *after* the great work of regenerating the human race had been already effected, should proclaim to all in that regard the completeness of the Work of Jesus in washing away with His blood alone the

<sup>1</sup> I refer, of course, to the twelve, or not to St. Paul.

<sup>2</sup> Surely a record of the apostles' baptism after its institution would have been emphatically given, if the sacrament had been intended to have a necessary regenerating efficacy to give completeness to the work of Christ. Although their baptism would not of itself have proved such regenerating efficacy, still, in view of the vital necessity, if it really existed, the fact that they were not baptised, or that we have no record of their baptism, serves to show very strongly that the sacrament was not regarded by them as at all creative, but illustrative. Unlike others, they were the direct recipients of the command to baptise, but not to be baptised; and that they were not, or that the world was given no record of their baptism, points to the divine wisdom by which they were guided, to do nothing which might turn the attention of men from the sufficiency of the Work of Christ; which was one of the main things intended to be set forth by the sacrament. They baptised to teach others, but to them the teaching was unnecessary, and would have been undignified formality; but to their converts, and to all subsequent generations, the duty is of universal obligation; and the existence of the sacrament in unbroken continuity through the ages assures each recipient, as it were, by the lips of Christ Himself, of the regeneration of the world, and of the other facts set forth in the sacrament;—in particular, that He will be with us and in us to the end of our "æon."

sin of the world, or both of the baptised and the unbaptised; the sacrament thus becoming His continual reminder of the removal from all men alike of the penalty of Death, and of their common restoration to Life; or that already in fact they have been "born again." And as thus given to us *after* the new birth, how clearly does its essential covenant of repentance further declare, that the necessity for the works of men to recover them from Sinfulness has not been in the least done away with, but rather is emphasised by that new birth. For after the Work of Jesus was done, what else could His subsequent institution of such a ceremony indicate, than the necessity, in order to perfect men, for *their* works to be superimposed upon *His own*, now that they have been endowed by Him with Life, and the consequent capacity to do spiritual work; or that in no sense did He come to abolish the law or the prophets, but to have them fulfilled both by Himself *and also by men*.<sup>1</sup> And in accordance with our daily experience, He thus declares, and in no uncertain way, that there is for all—whether believers or unbelievers—a baptism of the Holy Ghost, enabling us to do good works, and of fire, if we do them not. Hence Christian baptism, like that of John, is again a preparation for the Coming of the LORD; but this time for His continual Second Coming, as the Judge of all the earth.

§ 119. IGNORANCE OF NICODEMUS REGARDING BAPTISM.—Since then baptism was very properly of such late institution, and Jesus so consistently refrained from personally baptising, and since therefore, at the time when our LORD told Nicodemus that men must be born anew, or from above, to enter GOD'S kingdom,

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 5: 17-20.

and, of course, to continue to exist in the universe where He is the King, neither Nicodemus nor anybody else had ever heard of the sacramental or typical ceremony that told of the acquisition of the new birth as an already accomplished fact, it is quite clear that our wise and gracious Master would not have remonstrated with him because of ignorance of that which existed only in design in the Divine Mind, and of which Nicodemus could not possibly have known anything at all. And much more would his ignorance have been blameless, if baptism had been really intended to become, when instituted, the regenerating instrumentality which it has been claimed to be. What on the plane of the natural could he possibly have known of the supernatural, or indeed of such sort of a new birth, which was to be after a limited and ceremonial fashion, or for those only who should chance to receive from men an outward rite, and were so much opposed to a common redemption? We are told by St. Peter, that the very prophets themselves who "testified beforehand the sufferings in relation to Christ, and the glories subsequent thereto," did not, although diligently inquiring, understand their own prophecies of the coming "Salvation" which should be finally attained, and of the "Grace" which should open the way; and that into these things even angels desire to look.<sup>1</sup> And the general impression in our LORD'S time was, we know, of a very different Messiah from that of one who was to suffer at all. Indeed, previous to the interview under consideration, it may fairly be asserted, that there was no merely human being whose ideas upon the subject were correct.<sup>2</sup> Those of the Church were,

<sup>1</sup> 1 Pet. 1: 10-12.

<sup>2</sup> John 3: 12, 13. Matt. 11: 27. Luke 10: 22.

perhaps, most of all removed from truth. And yet the baptismal view of the words in question would make our LORD, upon uttering them, to insist, that Nicodemus should know beforehand not only all about the Sufferings, and the Salvation, and the Grace, but even about a Sacrament which should thereafter be divinely instituted, and that it should be a necessity, in order to effect the regeneration of those only to whom it should be duly administered! Much as I admire Nicodemus, I do not consider him to have been supernatural; and therefore I cannot claim for him, above all others, such divine penetration and foresight as his detractors would demand of him by their sacramental interpretation, and as was not possessed by the old inspired prophets, nor by angels!<sup>1</sup> Nor do I believe our Divine Master to have been so unreasonable as to have required it of him. For even if it were true, as must pursuant to that idea be held, that the great Work of Jesus was not a finished work, but required to be supplemented by the mechanical work on man's part of baptising, and thus, most incongruously, men, who before the law are non-existent, have their share, nevertheless, in the original acquisition of Life; and if, accordingly, Life is gained only by the baptised, and the most exalted of messengers was not truly sent from God to become of Himself "the Life of the world"; and if, therefore, the sending was not truly because of the love of God for all His creatures; or was not what Jesus Himself explains in regard to His mission and, too, on this very occasion, and in direct answer to the questions put to Him as to the meaning of the new birth; still, since Nicodemus could have known nothing, however diligent his study of the ancient Jewish scriptures,

<sup>1</sup> Eph. 3: 9, 10. 1 Pet. 1: 10-12.



of this alleged regenerating power of Christian baptism, how, possibly, could Jesus, the Just One, whose perfect righteousness is our *common* salvation, and the veritable "Life of the world," which the partially administered sacrament can never be, have been so unjust as to assert that Nicodemus ought to have known beforehand all about the uninstituted sacrament, even including its alleged *supernatural*, regenerating power; and because, forsooth, he was officially "the Teacher of Israel"? Is not the supposition absurd, and a charge also of folly, as well as of injustice, against our blessed LORD? Alas, alas, for the spirit of ecclesiasticism, which so persists, to the injury of the Church or people of GOD, in imposing upon the world its self-exalting inventions!

§ 120. THE NEW BIRTH.—And yet, on the occasion of the interview with Nicodemus, it is plainly mentioned, that Jesus declared what He had said to be not at all about anything *supernatural*, but an "earthly thing,"—that is, something entirely within the compass of His auditor's natural understanding, and which he, "the Teacher of Israel," if he would but reflect, should certainly know. This shows conclusively that our LORD was not speaking in any respect of the sacramental baptism afterwards to be instituted by Him, and certainly not of its having *unearthly* power; and the more supernatural we assume the sacrament to be, the more conclusive becomes the showing. And that Jesus repeated His obscure statement, and with the same peculiar emphasis as at the first, before proceeding to further explanation, and with the addition, in answer to the inquiry of Nicodemus, of even more obscure words, to wit, that the new



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birth should be "of Water and the Spirit," or by some *cleansing* and *reviving* process from GOD, to effect which, His visitor should infer, was His proper mission, or the one which really had caused Him to be sent from GOD, shows also, and most strongly, that there was something in that mission which He did not as yet wish the others present to understand, and which He preferred at that time to communicate only to the educated and thoughtful mind of "the Teacher of Israel." Our LORD, therefore, was not intending to reprove Nicodemus, but was only politely, but emphatically, arresting his attention and stimulating his faculties; at the same time, perhaps, giving some glance or gesture in respect of the others present, to intimate that His words were purposely obscure, and by way of parable. Had He been speaking of a new birth through baptism, there would have been no necessity for this caution, and no quickening of the attention would have given the best mind on earth the slightest inkling of what He meant. Who even at this day can see why a baptism of material water should be so strangely necessary to wash away sin, and cause a man to be "born again," that our Saviour should have declared it "*must* be" so; or why a mysterious power, so obviously supernatural, should be styled by Him an "earthly thing" which one should be able to understand? On the other hand, there was no difficulty to Nicodemus to understand then, nor is there now to us, that our LORD had been sent from GOD to give Life to the whole world, which GOD loved, notwithstanding its sins; nor the necessity of the new Life to those who were under the law of Death by reason of Sin, nor that the new Life *must* come from GOD alone, whatever the manner of its bestowal; nor, further, that the manner

must involve the washing away of the Sin which incurs the penalty, and the restoration of the Life by the Spirit of Life. Thus much, at least, it is possible to understand. But even to have told thus much, prematurely, to the then narrow-minded disciples of Jesus would have been to let them know, while altogether unprepared for the knowledge, and while their carnal minds were filled with glowing anticipations of their own future personal grandeur in the immediately coming kingdom of their Messianic Prince, that their worldly hopes were but dreams; and although they might not have learned how, instead, they were to be "made as the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things,"<sup>1</sup> still they would readily perceive, that the divine mission of Jesus, as represented by Him, would bring to them no personal grandeur of state, and would not even be for the special benefit of their own nation, but was for all men alike. In truth, even after Peter had been the recipient of pentecostal fire, it required the vision of the sheet knitted at the four corners, and filled securely, therefore, with all manner of legally unclean beasts from the four corners of the earth, to bring him into submission to the world-wide spirit of Christianity. But such great facts as that the mission of Jesus from God was to cleanse the whole earth, and give Life thereto, and that God loved all men irrespectively, and that what He was said to cleanse no man was to call common or unclean, whether circumcised or uncircumcised,<sup>2</sup> were the very things which Jesus was trying to impart to His keen-minded

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. 4: 13.

<sup>2</sup> Acts 10: 9-48. And whether baptised or unbaptised, or believers or unbelievers. In Acts 10: 28, 35, 47, it is shown that men are *cleansed* and *receive the Holy Ghost* before baptism.

interviewer, without letting the duller intellects around Him, saturated with their worldly hopes, understand whereof He was speaking. Even the styling what He had said "earthly things,"—so perfectly true in the proper sense, so consequential upon human works, and obscure, if applicable to baptismal regeneration,—would in their then worldly condition have only lent an earthly glamour to their expectations, and obscured to them the more the real meaning of His parabolic words.

§ 121. SUPERNATURAL IDEA OF NEW BIRTH.—Moreover, Jesus was about to answer also the inquiry of His earnest interviewer as to the special manner in which the necessity of the new birth was to be supplied by Him, namely, by His perfect life, followed by the death which belonged to a common malefactor upon the shameful cross. This was truly not an earthly matter which a man could understand for himself, but one which was supernatural, and could only be revealed to him from GOD; just as Jesus is presently to tell Nicodemus. And how then still more it would have endangered His cause to have His followers know of such a surely coming catastrophe! how it would have scattered them to the four winds, each man in disgust and dismay back to his home and calling! Nay, what afterwards was their amazement and horror, and how severely, in particular, Peter had to be rebuked, when at length the truth was told them; although better prepared for it by the wisest of instructors, and after they had personally seen more numerous and greater miracles than those which had attracted the attention of the more thoughtful Nicodemus! <sup>1</sup> And then, too, for the disciples, with their

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 16: 21-27.

exclusive, Jewish minds, to have learned in addition; that even the disappointing, although greater, benefits to accrue from the unworldly life and horrible death of their Master were not after all for the Jews only, or in any special sense, but for the whole world alike! We are, in fact, so accustomed to revere the apostles of our Lord for their wise, noble, brave, and liberal conduct after the day of pentecostal inspiration, that we have no proper, realising sense of what it means, that God did purposely choose the base things of the world, in order the more strongly to set forth His own guidance of the course of events, and to show that the wise, and noble, and brave, and liberal deeds of these honest and sincere, but illiterate, timid, and at the first narrow-minded and worldly hearted followers of Jesus, by Him selected to become His witnesses to men, were truly upon a supernatural plane. <sup>1</sup>

§ 122. NICODEMUS HAS CONFIDENCE IN JESUS.— But while our LORD's own disciples were thus for a time necessarily kept in the dark as to the true nature of His mission, what a compliment it was to Nicodemus, that to him alone of his nation all these things could be safely told; and that, indeed, he should thus have become the first of men to learn from the lips of Jesus Himself the wonderful tidings of the coming great Sacrifice of the Messiah, the Son of God, of which the prophets again and again had spoken, and of which, perhaps, "the Teacher of Israel," by constant communion with the holy scriptures, was best of all prepared, and therefore best deserved, to learn. How appropriate, then, that this diligent inquirer, who was even giving the night, as well as the day, to earnestly

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. 1: 26-31.

seeking the truth, should have been styled "the Victor out of the people," as is the idea of his name.<sup>1</sup> He had searched the scriptures well; he had not presumed to turn his back upon GOD's own revelations to men; he had not neglected his own GOD-given reason and entrusted the gifts, which were intended to be used, to the keeping of another; and so he was well rewarded; the one alone of all the people to conquer so early the confidence of Jesus! Yea, and note well that, in doing this, he was the first of all to break away from the traditions of the Church! as though he had heard the voice of the Master saying to the people, "Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?"<sup>2</sup> And now, is it not high time to ask, which one of us also can be like him, and, again heeding the Master, use for ourselves the ears which He Himself gives, and "hear what the Spirit (in His own holy writings) saith unto the churches"?<sup>3</sup> Nay, what unprejudiced person, with a truly catholic, all-embracing soul, could wish the great purpose of self-sacrifice which was filling the heart of Jesus, and out of His love for the whole world, to be belittled into a mere talk about a sacrament to be thereafter instituted, however important, beneficial, and commemorative of His great Work that sacrament should be; but which after all was to be of man's performance, and would not, as matter of fact, and could not, be administered to

<sup>1</sup> The more exact meaning is, however (for "people" is nominative), "the people of victory," or "the victorious people"; not (as some say) "the Conqueror of the people," which is unpleasantly ambiguous, and is not a suitable appellation, even in the mouths of his detractors, who would make him a timid man.

<sup>2</sup> Luke 12: 57.

<sup>3</sup> Rev. 2: 7, 11, 17, 29; 3: 6, 13, 22; 13: 9. Matt. 11: 15; 13: 9, 15, 16, 43. Mk. 4: 9, 21-25. Luke 8: 8, 16-18; 11: 28, 33-35, etc.



the whole world, and could never therefore be as far-reaching in its beneficial effects as would be the Sacrifice which He was about to offer for all men alike, and by which He only was to become "the *Life* of the world"? And where, pray, I repeat, would have been the necessity of parabolic and guarded language, if He were only talking about a sacrament? Let us rather keep in mind, that He will presently Himself explain what He meant, and in words which, however obscure they might have been at the time to the disciples, are now very plain to us; how, namely, "GOD so loved the world," or not merely the penitent, or the believers, or the baptised, but the whole world of sinners, that He had sent His Son, "that the world through Him should be saved." Shall we take His own explanation of what His meaning was, or that of the theologians? Shall it be the wisdom of "the wise and prudent" among men, or shall we, who are "the babes," indeed, but GOD's own children, seek out the very revelations of our GOD Himself? <sup>1</sup> Not that our LORD forgets at all those *superstructural* things which are *consequential* upon the accomplishment of His divine mission. He will show in due time, and at this very interview, that His own Work is preliminary, and vitally so, to man's; and that the individual, after having been capacitated by Him with Life and the Spirit, and thus enabled to work, must become a believer, *that is, be perfect in his deeds*, before he can have the full fruition of the higher life of heaven; and that meanwhile he will remain subject to judgment;

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 11:25. And see Deut. 29:29. "The secret (or unrevealed) things belong unto the LORD our GOD: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever, that we may do *all the words* of this law" (so revealed).



just as, Jesus declares, the world, for which He was to die, was so subject "already." Aye; for even with the creation the long day of "æonic judgment" upon the world began.<sup>1</sup>

§ 123. RÉSUMÉ OF NICODEMUS' INTERVIEW.—But let us not anticipate. Rather, for the clearer understanding of the interview, let us proceed therewith in a more consecutive order. Nicodemus, let us remember, had acknowledged Jesus to be a Teacher charged with a divine mission, and had impliedly asked Him what more than a Teacher He was sent from GOD to be; that is, whether He was merely as one of the old prophets, or what more. It is quite clear that Nicodemus was in a state of high expectation as to the mission of Jesus being of an unusually exalted character, and to have relation to ancient Messianic prophecy; and it is to this expectation that Jesus makes answer. How strange that our commentators should not have seen the question of Nicodemus, and should therefore have been confused by the words, "*Jesus answered*"! When they could not understand even that there had been a question, it is no wonder that they could not also understand the answer. In *answer* then to what Jesus was *more than a Teacher* sent from GOD for the instruction of men, Jesus begins by calling attention in the most emphatic way to the imperative and indispensable need which man has of the gift of a new Life through a new creation or regeneration directly from Heaven, after he had lost the old Life by the mortal blow of sin. "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be *born again* (or, rather, *from above*), he cannot

<sup>1</sup> Heb. 6: 2.

see the kingdom of God." Now surely we of this generation know very well how continually St. John's Gospel sets forth the LORD Jesus as the Renewer of the Life of the world when it was under sentence of Death; and that to effect such renewal was His exact mission to men. And in view of this, let the reader take notice, that the words of Jesus are in direct answer to the question as why He was sent from GOD, whether to be a Teacher only, or more. On receiving this answer, which he does not understand, Nicodemus is, however, made more inquisitive and alert by the parable or figure of speech therein, and because of the emphasis with which it is uttered, "*Verily, verily, I say unto thee.*" He catches at the strange phrase "born again," or "anew," or "from above," in which Jesus cloaks His idea, and, interrupting, asks for explanation. "Nicodemus saith unto Him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" Evidently Nicodemus had not caught at all the meaning of our Saviour's great declaration.<sup>1</sup> He is quite materialistic in his ideas; like those who at this day insist that Jesus speaks of a new birth through material water.

§ 124. THE NEW BIRTH AND ITS SOURCE.—But at all events his question, as was manifestly intended by the sacred writer, serves to call our attention the more strongly to the expression "born again," or, rather, "from above," in our Saviour's answer. And what follows shows an obvious determination to impress the truth upon Nicodemus the more, and through

<sup>1</sup> And yet his question in figure well indicates the impossibility of a sinner regaining his lost innocence and forfeited Life.

him upon us, of the indispensable necessity to men of the new gift of Life which the expression denotes, and that it was fundamental, and required super-structural development, or involved not only the Life itself, but also its growth and perfection. For with the same peculiar emphasis as before, and also with the same, as well as additional, parabolic cloaking, "Jesus answered, Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born of Water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." In this second answer, not only is the necessity of the new birth stated, but also the great Source from which it must of necessity, or in the very nature of things, be derived. The only Source is that of which St. Peter tells us; that we are (1 Peter 1:2) "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father by<sup>1</sup> (or, *in*) sanctification of spirit<sup>2</sup> through<sup>3</sup> the obedience and the sprinkling of the Blood of Jesus Christ." (*a*) And in the next verse,

<sup>1</sup> Instrumental sense of *en*—a. v. "through."

<sup>2</sup> We have here implied the Spirit of God sanctifying the spirit of man; so introducing the Father, the Spirit, and the Son. In love, God the Father foreknows and originates the mission of God the Son, whose Life of Righteousness and atoning Death bring to us the sanctification of spirit by God the Spirit; thus causing us (verse 3) to be "begotten again (or, from above) unto a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead," or to be born of Water and Spirit.

<sup>3</sup> *I. e.*, by means of, or in view or respect of, or because of (*eis*) His Life of Righteousness and substituted Death. In a similar manner the apostle addresses his Second Epistle,—“to those who have had allotted a common precious Faith with us in (*en*) the Righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ.” (Compare verse 11—“our LORD and Saviour Jesus Christ.”) And in verse 3 he says, “His Divine Power hath given us all things that pertain to *Life* and *Godliness*.” (In verses 8, 11; 2: 20; 3: 18, and in part in 3, the phrase “our LORD and Saviour Jesus Christ” is also given. In no respect do these phrases differ except where “GOD” is used for “LORD.”

repeating the statement, the inspired writer says: "Blessed be the GOD and Father of our LORD Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy *hath begotten us again* unto a *living* hope (not by material water,<sup>1</sup> but) through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."<sup>2</sup> Or, as St. James expresses it, "Of His own will He brought us forth (begat He us, a. v.) by the Word of Truth."<sup>3</sup> And St. Paul says: "GOD sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under law, that He might redeem those who were under law, that we might receive the said sonship (not, a. v., "the adoption of sons")."<sup>4</sup> And, in imitation of our LORD, the same apostle declares the new Life of man to have been "through a washing of regeneration, and a renewing of the Holy Ghost," or, rather, "of a holy spirit."<sup>5</sup> And inasmuch as, in these two passages and their contexts, the apostle thus proclaimed GOD in His mercy to have saved us, and the mission of the Son of GOD to have obtained redemption and sonship<sup>6</sup> for all under the law, that is, for all men, so, he consistently

<sup>1</sup> 1 Pet. 3:21.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Pet. 1:3. For "by the resurrection" the Gates of Hades were burst open, and ceased to be prevailing, and for the congregation therein Life was regained.

<sup>3</sup> Jas. 1:18.

<sup>4</sup> Gal. 4:4, 5.

<sup>5</sup> Tit. 3:5. It is literally "a renewing of a holy spirit," and may perhaps refer to our "new man," who cannot sin, because he is born of God, and not directly to the Holy Spirit, who effects the "renewing"; even as "a washing of regeneration" has a like reference to the regenerated, rather than to Christ the Regenerator. In either case, however, the divine Re-Creator is implied in His work, making the matter of no practical importance.

<sup>6</sup> The "new man" is not by adoption, but by re-creation, and so said to be "begotten" and "born." See § 45. In Gal. 4:5 "the said sonship," as above translated, relates to 3:26, where the apostle had declared positively that we "are all sons of God"; and the proper translation of the article in 4:5 is "the said."

told the idolatrous, unbaptised Athenians, in express terms, that they were "the offspring of GOD."<sup>1</sup> And St. John likewise, in his general epistle, tells us all, "Beloved, now are we children of GOD"; carefully excluding, nevertheless, the *old man* within us all, which knows not GOD, from that sonship; and confining it to the *new man*, also within us all, who "cannot sin, because he has been begotten of GOD."<sup>2</sup> And with the same careful distinction in his Gospel he writes, shortly before that Gospel tells us of the necessity to be born of Water and the Spirit:

"But as many as have received Him, to them (our new man) gave He capacity to have been born<sup>3</sup> children of GOD, (even) to them that believe in His name:<sup>4</sup> which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of flesh, nor of the will of man (therefore, neither by repentance, faith, nor baptism), but of GOD."(b)<sup>5</sup>

§ 125. CONCEPTION OF NEW BIRTH AS SPIRITUAL.—  
In telling Nicodemus of the necessity of the new birth of Water and the Spirit, we must not fail, indeed,

<sup>1</sup> Acts 17: 28, 29.

<sup>2</sup> 1 John 2: 29; 3: 1, 2, 8-10, 14, 24; 4: 7, 9, 10, 12-16; 5: 1, 4, 18-20.

<sup>3</sup> It is the past tense, conformably to the "which *were begotten*" (or "born") immediately following; and to translate as in the text better shows this, and rids us of the future idea which is apt in this passage to creep into our minds;—as though we are not already, but are "to become" children of GOD. We might also translate "to have been made" (L. and S. on the past tenses of this verb).

<sup>4</sup> Or to the sinless new man within us all, who only has obtained, and by his sonship, immortal Life; and whose part it is to destroy the mortal old man within us all, aided by the movings of the guiding Spirit of GOD, and the *unceasing* burnings of the *eternal* fire.

<sup>5</sup> John 1: 12, 13.



to observe our LORD's careful explanation, that His words must not be taken in a literal, material sense; or that He is not speaking of a birth from or by means of the things below, or in nature, but *from above*, even, as He says, from the Spirit of GOD Himself. He explicitly declares that which is born of flesh to be only flesh; and the corollary is, that if water, literal water, could have progeny it would be only water; while with the same explicit congruity of reasoning He points out, that to re-beget spirit requires the Begetter to be also Spirit. In other words, when GOD uses means, or does not act directly, but only mediately, the result is according to the means employed—no higher. Flesh begets flesh; and if, according to this law thus proclaimed by Himself, GOD used water to be the begetter, only water would be begotten.<sup>1</sup> And so, the Spirit, or GOD Himself, without mere matter being an intermediary, must be the Begetter of spirit; and certainly, as the inference is, He must be the Begetter of the spirits which are the children of GOD. From this also it is plain, that Jesus was proclaiming primarily the necessity of man to be begotten, not simply "again," as Nicodemus misconstrued His ambiguous expression, but "from above." To be so born would of course be a *new* birth, or to be "born *again*"; but it is not the primary idea. When we consider how very often metaphors representing the Redeemer as the Fountain or Water of Life, or of like tenor, are met with in the scriptures, and how repeatedly Jesus applies such metaphors to Himself,<sup>2</sup> and that on this occasion He expressly declares what He says to refer

<sup>1</sup> That is, pursuant to the law of its existence, it cannot rise above its level.

<sup>2</sup> As in the very next chapter. See John 4:14.



to a spiritual birth begotten of the Spirit, and further explains His mission to be to save the world,—that is, not alone the baptised,—how much more consistent with the facts it is, to recognise that, as was His custom, He was using the language of parable; on the present occasion, by a common, and therefore suggestive metaphor, to make known to His keenly attentive visitor, and at the same time cloak from His unsuspecting, and not so well-read disciples, what was the true nature and purpose and tragic end of His mission from the God above; this mission being the matter about which Nicodemus had asked, and to whose inquiry the sacred writer declares Him to be answering. In other words, how much more congruous with all the circumstances of the occasion to understand Him, not as abruptly introducing an ecclesiastical ceremony to be performed by others, but as speaking directly of Himself, as He was asked to do; announcing that He had come from above as the great and only Source of Life; that He was verily the Life of the world, and that through Him God would beget all men to Life,<sup>1</sup> and that to that end, even to save the world, He was to be “lifted up”; or, as we learn more definitely from the other scriptures, that in consequence of His mission from God, men would be re-created and begotten of God, with a new manhood which should have eternal Life; and, by His non-compulsory aid and that of the Spirit, that that new manhood should overcome the old, mortal manhood, and should never itself incur the penalty of Death, for the reason that it cannot sin; because

<sup>1</sup> See 1 Pet. 1: 3. Jas. 1: 18.

it is begotten of God.<sup>1</sup> So very plain, indeed, does all this seem, that the great prevalence of the doctrine of baptismal regeneration seems only to be accounted for by the curse of a "strong delusion," even an "energy of error," whenever, with the sheep-like tendency of the old man within, "the many" persist in following misleading leaders, whether ancient or modern, disobediently hearing these, or "the Church," instead of what the Spirit saith to the churches<sup>2</sup> and judging for themselves what is right.<sup>3</sup>

§ 126. THE NICODEMUS INTERVIEW PARAPHRASED.—But to understand our LORD the better, let us give a paraphrase of His line of thought in what follows of the interview to the end. He may be said thus to speak: I have mentioned, in answer to your question as to what is my mission from GOD, the necessity for man to be born from above. For you very well know, by observation and the declarations of the inspired writers,<sup>4</sup> the wages of sin to be Death; and that unless that curse be removed from a sinful world, man must perish forever. I have then indicated to you, that to gain for man a new Life I have been sent from above. This is my mission, which you have admitted to be from GOD. But you are asking, on the other hand, not how a man is to be *born from above*, but how he can be born again of his earthly mother when he is old;<sup>5</sup> confining your thoughts to

<sup>1</sup> 1 John 2: 2, 16, 17; 3: 1, 2, 6-10, 14; 4: 9, 10, 14, 17; 5: 4, 11-13, 18-20.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. 2: 7, 11, 17, 29; 3: 6, 13, 22; 13: 9. Matt. 11: 15; 13: 9, 43, etc.

<sup>3</sup> Luke 12: 57.

<sup>4</sup> Such as Gen. 2: 17; 3: 3, 19. Ezek. 18: 4, 20. Mal. 4: 1.

<sup>5</sup> The same word in the original has, let us bear in mind, both

that which is on the plane of the natural. Instead of this, I would have you grasp in mind the spiritual necessity of a new Life to man which I have mentioned. And that I may turn your attention from being engrossed by the letter of my parabolic words, or from the consideration of a birth which is not exclusively spiritual, and wholly from above, I have told you as the equivalent of what I had previously said, that man must be born of Water and the Spirit. I have thus indicated to you how different is the necessity of which I am speaking, and how purely spiritual. For a birth of Water and the Spirit, as the equivalent of a birth from above, instead of suggesting an earthly mother, or aught else that is earthly, should remind you of the necessity of a cleansing from sin, in order to escape its wages, and of the additional necessity of a sinless spirit that is fitted to have perpetual Life; and how God above is alone able to do the cleansing, and how His Spirit is the Source of all Life; and accordingly that He is expressly called in the scriptures the Fountain of Life; and that, pursuing the figure, they represent the Water of Life as flowing only from Him.<sup>1</sup> Thus while you are thinking only of that

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the senses of *from above* and *again*, or *anew* (see margins of a. v. and r. v.). The former is the sense as used by Jesus, and the latter as used by Nicodemus. This ambiguity tends to increase the misconception of Nicodemus; and so Jesus proceeds to explain that He was not speaking of things born of flesh, but of the Spirit, and of that also which one familiar with the scriptures very well knows. For "from above," the normal idea, see John 3: 31; 19: 31. Jas. 1: 17; 3: 15, 17.

<sup>1</sup> Deut. 33: 28. Ps. 36: 8, 9; 46: 4; 68: 26; 114: 8. Jer. 2: 13; 15: 18; 17: 7, 8, 13; 18: 14, 15; 31: 9. Is. 12: 2, 3; 32: 2; 35: 4-7; 41: 17, 18; 43: 19-21; 44: 3; 48: 1, 2; 49: 10; 55: 1. Zech. 12: 10; 13: 1; 14: 8, 9. Joel 2: 28, 29; 3: 18. Ezek. 16: 4-9; 17: 2, 8; 36: 25-27; 39: 29; 47: 9. And see also the application of the

which is born of flesh, I am seeking to direct your thoughts to the necessity for man to be born of, or receive new Life from, GOD above, in order to escape the curse of Death which is overhanging the world. You must first recognise clearly this necessity, which is within the compass of your earthly powers, before having pointed out to you how the curse is to be removed, which is outside your natural powers to ascertain for yourself.<sup>1</sup>

§ 127. EMPHASIS ON IDEA OF "BEGOTTEN FROM ABOVE."—Interrupting for a moment our paraphrase at this point, let us endeavour to appreciate how earnestly Jesus would have all who have sinned realise the necessity of being "begotten from *above*," and how He admonishes them against perverting the phrase by Him at the first employed, or His amplification of the same into "begotten of Water and the Spirit," by making His words to mean in any respect a necessity of being "begotten from *below*," or through the acts of men using material instrumentalities. St. Paul was a true follower of the Master when the apostle insisted that salvation from Death and justification unto Life were not at all the result of the works of sinners, but were *solely* due to "the Righteous-

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metaphor by our LORD to Himself in John 2: 1-11; 4: 10, 13, 14, 42; 6: 35, 53-56; 7: 37-39. Rev. 22: 1, 12; 21: 6. And note the expression that He *baptiseth* with the Holy Ghost. So the figure of the Rock in the wilderness, giving forth the Water of *Life* when smitten, is an example of many similar incidents wherein there is an analagous use of Water; and the sacred writings contain many other allusions thereto of analogous import.

<sup>1</sup> "He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is of the earth, and of the earth he speaketh: He that cometh from heaven is above all." John 3: 31.

ness of God through the Faith of Jesus Christ." Plainly Jesus corrected the misinterpretation which would have Him intend a birth in any way through flesh, or any acts of flesh, and much more through mere matter. Plainly He pointed out, that that which is of the earth is necessarily earthly, and can have no higher level; while what He had said referred to a birth of spirit, which must be exclusively effected by the Spirit of God. Plainly therefore His words have an opposing and condemning application to the low, materialistic view which would have the works of men, using material water, to have a part in spiritual regeneration, or in the restoration of men to Life. Such a view is even worse than that against which St. Paul contended; for in his argument the inefficient Works were the keeping of the whole moral law by the sinner upon his repentance; but this lower view would make regeneration to be accomplished merely through a ceremony! It is the lowest possible view, apparently, which could be held upon the subject, and the most materialistic.

§ 128. SUPERNATURAL AND SPIRITUAL REGENERATION.—And just here, let me say briefly, once for all, that the upholders of this very low, materialistic view must not try to dodge the authoritative declarations of Jesus as to man's regeneration from above, by imagining a distinction between the salvation from Death of all men, or between also their justification, on the one hand, and baptismal regeneration on the other; for if men, after being dead in law because of sin, are saved from Death, or if they are justified so as to be permitted to live in the pure atmosphere of God's



omnipresence, then have they attained a new, perpetual Life; that is, spiritually speaking, are born again; which is, plainly, regeneration; and the only question which remains is, by whom, and through what means, it is effected. And it was just this regeneration, no other, of which Jesus was speaking to Nicodemus, or, as He Himself soon after explains thereof, of His being sent from GOD to *save the world*. And so, to continue our paraphrase, having corrected His auditor's misunderstanding as to the regeneration intended, and shown that it was only the Spirit of GOD which should beget the children of GOD,—that is, after His own mission from GOD had opened the way,—Jesus thus proceeds:

Marvel not that I said unto thee (Nicodemus), Ye (sinners) *must be* born from above. Neither marvel that thou canst not understand the manner of the birth. For even because it is from above, it is not to be understood by those who are below; by those, indeed, who do not understand by any means all the things even of the earth upon which they dwell; and who therefore cannot expect to understand the things of heaven where they are not. For consider: The wind is all around thee, and thou hearest the sound thereof, and feelest it fanning thy cheek; and yet, in thy day and generation, thou canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth. Like the GOD above, its apparent life is invisible, and not fully comprehensible. So is the birth of every one that is born of the Spirit. If then thou canst not understand an earthly thing, even the coming and going of the wind right about thee, how canst thou presume to find out for thyself, occupying as thou dost the low plane of nature, a heavenly thing, even that which is supernatural, or *from above*, and the effecting of which pertains altogether to the Spirit of the invisible, incomprehensible GOD; of that GOD in respect of whom we



must needs accept that which is revealed, and can know nothing more?<sup>1</sup>

§ 129. “HOW CAN THESE THINGS BE?”—All this, of course, is paraphrase, and was not plainly expressed in words; because, let us remember, our LORD was purposely darkening His words, lest His disciples should be offended, and alienated from Him, upon learning that He was not to be the great earthly Messiah of their expectations. Indeed, His concise and parabolic method of speaking seems at first to have been too obscure even for the keen-minded and learned Nicodemus himself, and in a mystified manner he murmurs again, “*How* can these things be?” He is so preoccupied as to the *manner how* a man can be born the second time, that he fails to grasp the primary thought which Jesus was presenting, and to which He would first limit his attention, namely, the spiritual necessity of a new Life being obtained for man from GOD above. It became requisite, therefore, to get him out of this rut in which his thoughts were travelling; and to this end Jesus reminds him of the spiritual office which His visitor held among the Jews, and which, along with his talents and attainments, caused him to be regarded by his countrymen as a master in spiritual things. Our LORD rejoins: “Art thou the Teacher of Israel, and knowest not these things?” There was no better way to divert the preoccupied mind of Nicodemus from the sensual realm of matter to the purely scriptural and spiritual statement which Jesus was making. It showed that statement to have in it nothing novel or extraordinary, but to be simply one which a man so well versed in the scriptures as

<sup>1</sup> Deut. 29: 29.

was His learned auditor should know already. Still further to assure him of this, Jesus continues:

Truly, truly, I say unto thee, we are not talking about impossible things of the natural world which you cannot understand, and with all reason say so; but we are talking about an obvious necessity to man which we very well know, and are testifying to that which we have seen; for our senses are making evident to us every day the wickedness of men, and we know the inevitable result, if not remedied from above; and therefore in this matter you are not receiving our own personal testimony. For I have spoken only of ordinary earthly things—that is, of things which are transpiring in the knowledge of men upon the earth, and are really within the compass of your earthly powers to understand, and are right before your eyes; not at all of impossibilities on the plane of the natural, one of which has so preoccupied your mind.<sup>1</sup>

§ 130. NECESSITY OF NEW BIRTH.—In regard then to the *necessity* of the new birth about which I am now speaking, do not let your thoughts be beguiled away for the moment from that necessity. I shall presently reveal to you in a general way the *manner* thereof, and, in doing so, answer more fully your question as to my mission from GOD. For, since my mission, as you confess, is from above, and the effecting of the new birth through my mission is, as declared

<sup>1</sup> Evidently therefore of no baptism of earthly water; for a new, spiritual Life, or the necessity thereof, through such a material instrumentality—*i. e.*, so-called baptismal regeneration by the Works of men—was certainly not a thing which Jesus could appeal to as that which Nicodemus should have known and understood as a matter of course.

by me, also from above, the manner thereof pertains to heavenly things which belong solely to God; which man could never find out for himself, nor understand in its fulness when he is told; which therefore can only be known by man in so far as it may be revealed to him. But it is not of things of that heavenly character that I spoke as I did, nor even, as yet, of so much thereof as concerns the execution of my mission upon earth in the sight of men. Of this latter I shall inform you briefly before I am through; but I would first prepare you to accept upon faith all that I shall presently reveal in that regard; enough to show God's wonderful, unchangeable love for the world; a world now under sentence of Death, and needing therefore, as I have stated, to be born from above; that is, I repeat, needing to be cleansed by the great Fountain or Water of Life above, and, in addition, to have begotten in every individual by the Spirit a new, sinless Life. Now these are things which are declared in the scriptures, and are within the reach of the earthly understanding, and which, moreover, you should accept also upon my authority, seeing that you admit that authority to be from God, and to be attested by supernatural miracles. I would have you then first realize man's great fundamental necessity, before I answer your repeated questions as to how the necessity is to be supplied. For if I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, when next, in due order, and as consequential thereupon, I shall proceed to tell you heavenly things;—things, that is to say, which are really above your comprehension, and about which you are prematurely asking. First of all, then, you must fully perceive the earthly side of the matter, or the side which is turned toward

you, before you can accept my declarations respecting the heavenly side, or the side which is turned from you; and about which you can only learn by revelation from heaven. Accordingly, as to this, you should take the testimony of the One sent from GOD, whom you confess me to be. For no man has ascended into heaven to ascertain for himself such an exclusively heavenly thing as this, namely, how the holy GOD who is "of purer eyes than to behold evil,"<sup>1</sup> can find a way to become the Re-Generator of a sinful race, and perpetuate the lives of those who were defiling His universe and presence. The problem is clearly above the capacities of the creatures of earth, who have no direct knowledge of the high matters of heaven, and are necessarily dependent upon revelation for all that they can learn of such matters. For, to repeat, no man has ascended into heaven, that he should arrogate to himself to know aught about the doings of GOD, except as they are revealed. But the Son of man came down from heaven, and, being omnipresent, is also even now in heaven. If then, at last, you now realize the necessity for man to be born *altogether from above*, or of GOD, and of GOD both as the cleansing Water of Life, and as the Spirit begetting spirit, I, who know the high counsels and purposes of GOD, having already told you, in answer to your first question, that it is even to supply this fundamental necessity that I am "come from GOD"; will, in answer to your other questions, now also tell you what, as a heavenly thing, you must accept upon faith as coming from me, and which in its heavenly mystery you cannot hope fully to understand, namely,

<sup>1</sup> Hab. 1: 13.

how I am to effect this regeneration, or new birth of man from above.

§ 131. REQUISITES TO MAN'S PERFECTION.—Before proceeding further with our paraphrase, however, of our LORD'S words to Nicodemus, the reader should call to mind the three great requisites to man's perfection, and which should be his therefore, in order in the highest sense to enter the kingdom of God. That is to say, he should be immortal, holy, and happy; and should have, of course, three corresponding Salvations, namely, from Death, Sinfulness, and Suffering. And to have the First Salvation, or be freed from the curse of Death, he must not only be cleansed from all sins, but have begotten in him from above, as just mentioned, a new, sinless, and, in consequence, immortal Life. For with sin done away in respect of both the past and the future, Death will be abolished, and then Life, coupled with Immortality, will be brought to light.<sup>1</sup> But as GOD has conferred free-will upon man, and never repents of His gifts,<sup>2</sup> this new creation must be effected without the least interference with man's sovereignty. And furthermore, since for GOD to compel man to be holy would not only degrade man into a machine, but make GOD His own worshipper, it is evident also that man's sinful condition must be suffered to remain in him, until riddance therefrom is effected by himself. And thus it is, in order to fulfil these directly opposing, complex, and seemingly irreconcilable conditions, GOD, on the one hand, in His love for the world, and pursuant to the atoning and justifying Work of Jesus Christ, begets in each individual the new, sinless, immortal Life

<sup>1</sup> 2 Tim. I: 8-10.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. II: 29.



of a child of God; while, on the other hand, for all the time that man persists in remaining imperfect, the old, sinful, mortal life cannot be taken away, by virtue of which he continues to be a child of the devil. Hence, in order for him to gain his Second Salvation, or become holy, he must become in a perfect sense what the Bible calls a *believer*; one whose deeds are wrought in God, conformably to the divine nature implanted in man's being; the old nature having been at last by himself utterly destroyed. Until this takes place, he will remain under judgment for his evil deeds, and his Third Salvation will of course not be attained. There is at first glance an apparent uncertainty as to the meaning, when our Saviour, in His further explanations to Nicodemus, speaks of the believer. But in view of the words, yet to be given, with which the interview is concluded, the necessary inference seems to be, that in His use of the terms "believeth" and "believed," He is referring to the perfected man, who has gained the victory over the "old man," or "child of the devil"; who is therefore, He states, no longer under condemnation; and whom accordingly He describes as a doer of the truth, whose deeds have been wrought in God. That is to say, Jesus is not referring to the believer in the militant, but in the triumphant state; and so, in addition, He is referring, not *merely* to the new clean seed as *planted* in every man, but to the perfected fruit thereof also. In short, His words have reference, in due order, to the three salvations essential to man's perfection. (1) The Son of man is "lifted up," saving from Death; (2) that the believer, saved from Sin and Sinfulness, (3) should no longer be perishing under condemnatory judgment, but should have eternal Life, or be



saved from Woe, having Life forever in its most abundant sense.<sup>1</sup>

§ 132. REQUISITES TO ADMITTANCE TO KINGDOM.—  
 In order then to understand the better what our LORD says in continuation to Nicodemus, let us keep in mind the three requisites to admittance into the kingdom of GOD on high; to wit, to be born of GOD, which is the one first mentioned by Jesus, to become a perfect believer, and to be in consequence freed from all condemnatory judgment. As though, indeed, Jesus was taking pains to make it the clearer, not only to His then auditor, but also to the Christians of all ages, that He was neither speaking of *material* things, nor, at the first, of the *manner* of the new birth,—that is (to apply His words) neither of material water, nor of baptising therein for any purpose whatever,—but of a plain *necessity* to man's perfection which is readily recognised by the human mind, and equally as well by the Jew, the pagan, or the Christian; as though, that is to say, Jesus would put the purely spiritual character of His words beyond a doubt, and show how essential was His mission; just *three* times, in accord with the number of all the essentials to perfection, and of the Personality of the Triune GOD of whose fundamental Work for man He was speaking, did He repeat the statement of the *necessity* to be born of Him who is the only Source of Life. And He does this each time, as His words plainly show, without making the least reference to the *manner* in which the necessity should be supplied. Nay, He purposely

<sup>1</sup> "I am come that they may have Life, and may have (it) abundantly." John 10: 10. See Tit. 3: 6 and 2 Pet. 1: 11; also for the proportion idea Numb. 20: 11. Is. 55: 7. Eph. 3: 20.

for the time excludes all consideration of the manner, and tells Nicodemus not to be then asking about it, because He was not speaking thereof, striving first to have him appreciate how fundamental was the necessity. And at each repetition of His statement of that necessity He makes it plainer, that we must seek for His meaning, not in "the letter," not in the realm of flesh, but from that of the spiritual world, even from that kingdom above which only has the power of generating Life; or not in water of the earth, but in the "Water" which flows from the Eternal Being from whom all Life proceeds. Thus was made with peculiar emphasis a threefold answer, each growing in plainness over that which preceded to the first question of the learned Jewish counsellor as to why Jesus was sent from GOD; while it was clearly shown also that Jesus was using the language of parable, as was particularly necessary on this occasion. And thus, in view of the question which He was answering, and the threefold stress which, in direct connection with His mission from GOD, He was putting upon the necessity of a new Life to man from above, did He thrice intimate that He, the Speaker Himself, was the cleansing Fountain of Life to man, or, verily, the Water of which man must be born. The intimation was purposely made obscure to the disciples, and by them at the time was not understood. But it seems from the ceasing of Nicodemus to ask for further explanation, that it was otherwise with this intelligent "Teacher of Israel," who, well versed in the scriptures, and wondering whether Jesus was the expected Messiah who was to bear the iniquity of us all,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Is. 53: 6. Jesus looked for such an understanding of His mission from those nobler men, like Nicodemus and Joseph of

had come to Jesus for the express purpose of learning all he could about Him.

§ 133. THREEFOLD NATURE OF CHRIST'S MISSION.— Without any more interruption from His interviewer, therefore, Jesus proceeds. And it is worth observing how, in conformity with His threefold intimation of the great purpose of His mission, He now *three* times reveals the *manner* in which that mission was to be executed. Resuming then our paraphrase of His words, Jesus, having answered the first question of Nicodemus as to the nature of His mission, thus goes on to answer his other question, twice repeated, as to how man was to be born. He says:

*First.* As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, (to save from death the sinners who were serpent-bitten,) even so (to save the world from Death), must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but should have eternal Life.

*Second.* For GOD so loved the world (yea, in spite of its sin-defiled condition), that He hath given <sup>1</sup> His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but should have eternal Life.

*Third.* For GOD hath not sent His Son into the world to judge the world, and inflict upon it the Death which was its due; neither to inflict the judgment according to deeds, which was being administered already; but that the world through Him should be saved. He that believeth in Him,

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Arimathea, who were well read in the scriptures, and even from His unlettered disciples also after His instructions. See Luke 24: 25-27; 20: 19. Matt. 13: 15-17.

<sup>1</sup> The perfect tense best translates here the Greek aorist, because the mission of Jesus was *then* continuing. The preterit of the versions implies that which is altogether of the past.

that is, is not sinful,<sup>1</sup> is not judged; for that which is begotten of God cannot sin; but he that believeth not, or retains at all within him that old nature which was begotten of the devil, is judged already; not, indeed, on the one hand, to the immediate, final Death from which he is saved, nor, on the other, so as to force him to be holy; for this would be putting compulsion upon his God-given sovereignty of will; but judged justly, with the duly proportioned, and therefore uncoercive pains of the Second Death; justly, because of his own free-will, more or less strongly exerted, he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. That is to say, each man is judged already according to his voluntary *faith*; or (which is but the same thing in other words), in strict accordance with his deeds; for it did not require the Son of God to take upon Him the nature of men, in order to be their Judge. And yet, His judgments, though administered with the power of God, will never be compulsory; but, both as Saviour and Judge, He leaves to men always the complete mastery in each case of the individual will, and never by any salvation or judgment causes the faith and the corresponding deeds of the individual to be otherwise than purely the man's own. As men themselves therefore love good or evil, so is the judgment. For men, endowed by anticipation from the beginning with a divine nature begotten of God, and having thus received the light which has come into the whole world, yet, retaining their old nature begotten of the devil, have loved the darkness rather than the light, preferring the evil nature to the good, and have shown it by their deeds; for their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth unseemly things hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.<sup>2</sup> But

<sup>1</sup> In addition to what follows on this occasion see also for the proper sense of *believeth* here, John 6: 27-29. 1 John 3: 18-24. Heb. 3: 12-19, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Or, rather, "exposed." The margin of the a. v. renders "discovered."

he that doeth the truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they have been wrought in God.

§ 134. CHRIST LAYS FOUNDATION; BUT MEN BUILD SUPERSTRUCTURE.—These words of caution against the idea of Grace doing away with the works of the creature, and, in particular, against any substitution of faith for other works of men, complete the interview. In these words is declared plainly the necessity of the Superstructure to be erected by men upon the Foundation laid by the Divine Speaker; or that sinful men must not imagine that Grace will do all, and that they are not to be required in turn to do their parts also as sovereign free agents. So long as they love darkness, and are evil in their deeds, it is unmistakably told them that they would continue under judgment, and that the judgment *is already being administered*. Although the Son of man was indeed to be lifted up for the salvation of men, He was not to become “a minister of sin.” Rather, if the judgment of the law meant even Death to the sinner, much sorer still would now be his judgment; seeing that, preserved from Death in the midst of his Heaven-provoking sins, and therefore calling in vain for the mountains and the rocks to fall on him, and hide him forever in the completeness of destruction from the face of his Judge, he is preserved to suffer, after he has ventured to presume upon the precious Blood that has saved him; and to tread under foot the great purpose of the Son of God, and to do despite unto the Spirit of Grace; even trifling with that pure, cleansing, Divine Water, and that Holy Spirit of which he was born through the sacred Blood of the



Cross.<sup>1</sup> And so, Jesus, in telling of His heavenly mission to save the world, lets us know at the same time that, pursuant to His purpose, it is only the believer, that is, the perfect man, who shall be delivered from a perishing condition, and enjoy eternal Life in its highest sense; and that all unbelievers, or all doers of evil, shall suffer judgment;—in other words, unlike the believer, shall go on perishing in strict conformity with their deeds, until the old man within finally perishes altogether. As it is said:

“I create the fruit of the lips (the new Life causing even the tongue of the dumb to sing, and being compared by the prophet to the *waters* in the desert, or in the thirsty land);<sup>2</sup> peace, peace to him that is *far off*, and to him that is near, saith the LORD; and I will heal him. But (for all that comes the judgment; for) the wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose *waters* cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my GOD, to the wicked.”<sup>3</sup>

§ 135. PURPOSE OF CHRIST'S MISSION.—This then is the explanation of our LORD Himself, three times repeated, of the purpose of His mission, and of *the manner in which man was to be begotten from above, or of Water and the Spirit*. But a short time before, by turning Water into Wine, whereof all present, both Jews and Gentiles, both the bad and the good, alike irrespectively partook, Jesus had indicated in a parable, as we have seen, according to His usual careful manner, that His Life was to end in Blood in behalf of all alike irrespectively. And the various other cir-

<sup>1</sup> Gal. 2: 17, 18. Heb. 10: 26-31. Rev. 6: 15-17. Tit. 3: 4-7. Col. 1: 19-29.

<sup>2</sup> Is. 35: 4-10; 41: 18; 43: 19-21; 44: 3; 48: 20-22.

<sup>3</sup> Is. 57: 19-21.



cumstances of the miracle had had each its appropriate significance; such as, the making of it His first miracle on going from the Jews to the Gentiles; the filling to the brim of the *six* waterpots of *stone*,—that symbol of Death,—in which waterpots of their own filling men through their ceremonial works had vainly striven to purify themselves; the utter failure of the wine provided by their other and more substantial works or industry for themselves; the approval by the ruler of the feast of the new supply;<sup>1</sup> the freedom of the gift to all; the rebuke even of His mother for attempting on any pretext to introduce her personality into that Work which pertained to Himself alone; of which rebuke let the advocates of baptismal regeneration take special note;<sup>2</sup> and even the wedding itself, denoting the lasting reconciliation of God with man. And as it were to make very plain the meaning of His symbolic use of Water, whether in His actions or words, the very next time that we hear of Him speaking after the interview with Nicodemus, He symbolises the new Life shortly to be given by Him as *living Water*; even that which should be in the drinker a well of Water springing up in *everlasting Life*; thus assimilating, in the language of parable, the symbol of that which is begotten through Him, to the symbol of Himself, the medium of the begetting—Water

<sup>1</sup> "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."—Matt. 3:17.

<sup>2</sup> Those who are so fond of calling the Church Militant our *Holy Mother*, in the very face of the sins and corruptions which are the self-evident results of the prevailing power of the devil over "the old man" in the individual members, should also see in the rebuke a warning to the Church, not to arrogate to itself a share in the regeneration of Life. Hebraism, or Jewish mode of speaking, and filial veneration have nothing to do with the speech of Jesus. It is God who rebukes.

begetting water, conformably to what He had said to Nicodemus, that like begets like. Indeed, in His symbolic use of Water on that occasion, He was availing Himself of its frequent prophetic employment in Levitical ceremony and by the sacred writers; deeming it therefore a symbol which would make itself intelligible to one so familiar with both as was Nicodemus. Among many similar allegorical instances of its use in the elder scriptures, it may be called to mind how that it was of no water of earth of which Ezekiel prophesied, when he said :

“Then will I sprinkle clean Water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A *new heart* also will I give you, and a *new spirit* will I put within you: and I will take away the *stony heart* (even the curse of Death) out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh (*i. e.* Life). And I will put my *spirit* within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes.”<sup>1</sup>

And long before the days of Ezekiel, this prophecy of his, when it came, had been definite as to the Water intended, seeing that Isaiah, in his marvellous description of the Redeemer as One who was to bear the iniquity of us all, had written of Him, “So shall He sprinkle many nations.”<sup>2</sup> So often, indeed, in the elder scriptures is Water the symbol of the LORD as the Fountain of all Life, that its use by the Divine Speaker to denote Himself as the Life of the world was, as already mentioned, peculiarly well adapted,

<sup>1</sup> Ezek. 36: 25-27. The *new heart* and *new spirit* and even the *heart of flesh* also represent, respectively, besides *Life*, the *new man*; and the *stony heart*, besides Death, the *old man*.

<sup>2</sup> Is. 52: 15.

first, to suggest to the well-read Nicodemus His true meaning, and yet, next, as on other occasions of the use of the symbol by our Saviour, to cloak from His hearers in general the knowledge that He was speaking of Himself. In His explanation of His mission, therefore, by this and other darkened language, He makes known to Nicodemus, but conceals from His disciples, the fact that He was to die upon the cross of the common malefactor, that the world might be saved, and the believer have eternal Life in full fruition, free from all condemnatory judgment; while the unbeliever would remain under judgment for his evil deeds notwithstanding that salvation.

§ 136. CHRIST SILENT ABOUT SACRAMENTAL BAPTISM.—In view of what is thus minutely explained, telling, in fact, as the result of the mission of Jesus, of the three salvations to be obtained which are necessary to the perfection of man, let us carefully observe, that although the explanations of the begetting of men from *above* of Water and Spirit <sup>1</sup> are three in number,<sup>2</sup> and are quite explicit to us now-a-days,

<sup>1</sup> There is no article in verse 5 before "Spirit," but is (as to the begetting Spirit) in verses 6 and 8.

<sup>2</sup> To illustrate how blind wise and learned commentators can be, and how arbitrary in their deductions, some have supposed the words of Jesus, *contrary to the text*, to end with verse 13, and the following words to be only those of St. John. But no wonder, when it was not even understood why it is said in verse 3, "Jesus answered." Of course, therefore, they could not understand that the unperceived *question* why He was being sent from God required an explanation. The true rule for the individual seeker after truth is, Hear the *argument* of the commentator, but be your own *authority*. It is therefore for us "the babes" to be our own judges where "the wise and prudent" go astray; and to do this is not arrogance, but a duty.

and show very plainly what is above stated; and although, in explanation of His mission from God, the necessity and manner of this birth from above, and its consequences and responsibilities, thus became the engrossing subjects of His conversation with Nicodemus, and are all distinctly set forth; yet, in no one of the three explanations is a single word said about sacramental baptism, or, for that matter, about water at all, or the least intimation given that through such means man was to gain Life, or be born again. Nay, instead thereof, the moment Nicodemus introduced a new birth by material instrumentalities into the conversation, Jesus at once corrected him, saying, that the regeneration of which He was speaking was to be effected by nothing lower than God Himself; for that He was speaking of a birth of spirit; and that only the Spirit could beget spirit, all else following its *natural* law. And in addition, He afterwards expressly explained that it was His own "lifting up" which should be the means whereby the Life for man was to be gained. And, moreover, instead of any intimation that the few who might be baptised were those who only should receive the new birth, He is emphatic in proclaiming God's love for *the world*, and that it was to save *the world* He had been sent from God. In truth, simply at the first, and for a single time, and in a symbolic way, did He use the term *Water*, and forthwith dropped its use, so soon as He perceived that Nicodemus understood Him, and only thereafter took care to speak in the third person, first, of the Son of man, and then, of the Son of God; thus while (aided by gestures perhaps) making His meaning more plain to His keen-minded auditor, as it ought now to be to us, nevertheless, by this roundabout,

changeful manner, making it the more difficult for His disciples at that time to follow His words; although, in the end, the Spirit was to bring all things to their remembrance.<sup>1</sup> All through the interview, therefore, it is evident that Jesus is pursuing His only proper answer to what He had been asked, namely, why He had been sent from God; that is, what He Himself had come to do. He certainly had not come to baptise; for it is distinctly said, on another occasion shortly afterwards, that Jesus Himself did not baptise; while His disciples did.<sup>2</sup> It was most consistent in Him accordingly to say nothing about baptism. For Nicodemus had not asked what the disciples were to do, whether to baptise, or do some other thing. For that matter, he knew nought of their future mission, or of Christian baptism. His thoughts were wholly upon the mission of Jesus Himself, and of that he asked; and it was what he asked that Jesus was answering.

§ 137. BAPTISMAL REGENERATION NOT INTRODUCED.—If, however, Jesus did not answer, as it is said He did, about His own mission, or about what He Himself had come to the world to do, but abruptly introduced the subject of baptismal regeneration,—a dogma at that time wholly unknown,—then there would have been no necessity for darkened language upon the subject; while what He did say about flesh begetting only flesh, and *only spirit* spirit, with His repeated subsequent affirmations that His lifting up would bring Life to the world, and the like, would have been foreign thereto, and inconsequential, and contradictory of the assumed original statement that

<sup>1</sup> John 14: 26; 16: 4-6, 12, 18-20, 25.

<sup>2</sup> John 4: 1, 2.



we must be born of material water.<sup>1</sup> In fact, supposing baptismal regeneration to have been His theme, our LORD throughout His discourse would have been utterly unintelligible to Nicodemus, and none of His explanations would have explained; explanations, in truth, which make no mention whatever either of baptism or even of water. And yet, His inquisitive interviewer shows at the time by abstaining from further questioning, and afterwards by what is said of him, that he went away very well satisfied with what he had heard. On the other hand, if the dogma of baptismal regeneration be not arbitrarily introduced into the interview, we have a connected discourse from our LORD, perfectly consistent in itself, and with all His other teaching, and with that of the sacred writers, and admirably calculated for its double purpose, on the one hand, to tell Nicodemus the great secret of His approaching death on the common malefactor's cross, in order to give Life to the world, and on the other hand, to veil the secret for the present from all others. But if, without other reason than our own arbitrary will, taking advantage of the metaphorical expression "water," and having nothing in what was otherwise said to take advantage of, we insist that a new birth by ceremonial baptism was intended by our LORD, and that, such being the case, Nicodemus, the teacher only of Jews, and knowing only the Old Testament,

<sup>1</sup> For the mission of Christ was to give Life, either to the world, as He declares, and by His own direct act, and in a spiritual way, or only to the baptised, as the materialists declare, and indirectly on His part, through the Works of men, from age to age, by their use of material means. And so, how careful He was to say that His life was not taken from Him by man, but that He laid it down of Himself! John 10: 17, 18. The important bearing of this upon John 6: 53 also may be readily seen.



should have understood all about baptismal regeneration, and was fitly criticised for his ignorance of this so-called Christian dogma, then the wonder is, that one, who was so quick to let it be known when he did not understand should, upon the absence of explanation in that direction, have ceased to question, while an explanatory discourse which would seem to have no connection with water or water baptism was delivered to him, and which therefore, as explanatory of a regeneration through material water, must have seemed to him as unintelligible and as foreign to the subject as it was possible to be made. And yet, his very ceasing to question shows that he did understand what Jesus really intended; and he afterwards said as much when he told the Jewish council that they should not assume to condemn our LORD before they too had heard Him, and *knew what He doeth*. And that he did understand, and had made his fellow-councillor Joseph, who had been theretofore a timid believer, a partner of his knowledge, is the only thing which accounts for their unique boldness at the time of the Crucifixion.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Some may try to dodge the point at issue by *supposing* Jesus to have intended both baptismal regeneration and also what He did say that Nicodemus understood. But they give no grounds for so *supposing*; and certainly none appear. We can suppose anything; but supposition and assumption are not enough. Why did not Jesus then so explain to the questioning Nicodemus when He *answered* him? Surely His explanations are quite plain as to His mission being to give Life to and save the world; but how about the *supposed* baptismal regeneration? It remains—a *supposition*; and as a supposition we leave it to the infatuated, self-satisfied placidity of ecclesiasticism, whose faith may not remove mountains; but neither can mountains remove it. Against any amount of truth it will hold to its serenity, and in its "strong delusion" cannot be shaken. We have seen, however, how every argument is against the assumption.

§ 138. REGENERATION THROUGH CHRIST.—To direct the attention of men first and above all things to the great events of the Life and Death of Jesus, rather than to symbols, and thus in a measure ward off the abuses of ecclesiasticism, may have been reasons, in addition to the more direct ones, why He deferred to the last the institution of those memorial sacraments which were to perform their necessary part in retaining in the world the knowledge of what He had done for men. And in respect of baptism it was most appropriate that He Himself refrained so carefully from baptising; seeing that it was not by a ceremony that men were to be born of God through Him, but solely because of His Life of Righteousness and atoning Death.<sup>1</sup> And it was well also that previous to His saving Work men, and particularly His own disciples, should have been engaged in baptising one another with the baptism which told only of their own repentance or efforts to lead for themselves the Life of Righteousness; that is to say, which told of the vanity of their subsequent works, even if perfect, to save sinners from the Death which is declared to be the wages of their sin. Thus was baptism, as finally instituted by Him, made the better memorial of His own Work, in contrast with theirs. Nay, since it was to be a reminder of Himself after He had left the world and ascended into heaven, how incongruous it would have been for Him to have celebrated a ceremony of reminder while still present among men.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Like as the goodness in men shows them to be born of the Spirit, so, most consistently, the Bible declares the Holy Spirit to fall upon men also *before* baptism (Acts 10: 44-48), and also that they *believe before* baptism (Acts 2: 41; 4: 4; 8: 12, etc.).

<sup>2</sup> So, the passover feast was made to foretell the offering of the true paschal Lamb to the very last, and only then, after its final

In fact, it is just these subtle refinements of congruity which illustrate the supernatural character of the inspired word. And by His postponing the institution of baptism as a memorial sacrament until after the events memorialised were performed, and in His refraining from baptising, there was not only congruity of action, but it was shown also that men ought rather to dwell in mind upon the events, and upon what had been accomplished by them, than upon the ceremonies instituted to remind us thereof. In other words, the postponement, and especially the refraining, indicate the teaching of baptism to be, that through no material water are men begotten of God in Christ; but that the sacrament is designed rather to show forth for all time how that *all men* have been baptised into His Death, and risen again in His Resurrection;<sup>1</sup> or that in His Death, completing His Life of Righteousness, they too have died, and suffered the penalty of sin; and thus, having their sins removed (like as in the symbolic ceremony the natural flesh is washed in the baptismal water), and a new Life of Righteousness given to all irrespectively, in Him again they all have risen, and are accordingly born into that new Life which is of God with all its inseparable consequences, including the new Judgment according to Deeds, in the place of the old Death from which we have been delivered.<sup>2</sup>

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celebration, was changed to the feast which thereafter was to remind us that its prophecy had been fulfilled. See Luke 22: 15-18.

<sup>1</sup> Rom. 6:3-11. Col. 2:12.

<sup>2</sup> In argument with even a presbyter of good education I have learned the necessity of pointing out the difference between previous baptisms which told only of repentance, and the baptism instituted by our LORD, which told rather of His than of our

§ 139. REGENERATION NOT ACCOMPLISHED BY BAPTISM.—And here let it be remembered again, and due weight given to the fact, that the declaration of the necessity of regeneration was made before the institution of Christian baptism; or before the sacrament, or any idea of regeneration thereby, had been known among men, including, let us bear in mind, among even the followers of our LORD; and yet was declared to be what “the Teacher of Israel” should very well know; showing plainly, that a regeneration by baptism could not be the thing intended. But if, as the misrepresentation would have it, there had been truly a preëxistent necessity for the sacrament, then, on that supposition, the lateness of the institution, after billions of the human race had died, and again the persistent and evidently careful postponement of the institution during the life of Jesus, the self-avowed Saviour of *the world*, and, in conformity therewith, the strict refraining by Himself from baptising, while men, on the supposition, were daily perishing without the possibility of ever entering the Kingdom of GOD,—whatever else such things may show forth,—of a certainty would not indicate that GOD loves, or ever loved, *the world*; but just the contrary. For if baptism be thus essential to the regaining of Life for the individual, and so palpably essential that Nicodemus, as a learned Jew, even before its institution, should have known the fact (although, it being a simple, arbitrary ceremony, how he possibly could have thus known, let those who so believe explain), then the supposition means, that an absolute neces-

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keeping of the law, and whose superstructural significance was simply consequential upon the Foundation laid by Him. See Matt. 3: 11-17. Acts 1: 5; 10: 44-48; 19: 1-7.

sity to the Life of the world has never been supplied—neither before the coming of Christ, nor since! Not since; for the administration of the sacrament to all mankind has never since been possible. Nay, after that coming, there was (assuming the supposed fundamental necessity of baptism for the regeneration of the individual, and his entrance into the kingdom of God) not the slightest regard apparently had for the multitudes who were daily departing from the world; the very institution of the sacrament being delayed until after the professed Saviour of all men had Himself died, and risen again, and was about to leave the world! For, remember, the statement is without qualification, that “Except a man be born of Water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” Hence it strictly requires, if the supposition be correct, the shutting out of that kingdom for ever of all who die without being baptised. Any merciful qualifications of the statement which we may choose to invent, or to infer from other texts, are not those of our LORD, and would seem to be introducing, and very unnecessarily, confusion and incoherence into the revelations of GOD. The words of Jesus are positive, and on the side of love; and if therefore they are capable of a positive interpretation on that side in harmony with the other scriptures, it should be given. As between the two opposing views, it is either that He Himself alone is the Life of the world or that He becomes the Life of the baptised only. If the latter, then of course He is not the Life of the world; although over and over again He so declares; and, in substance, at this very interview with Nicodemus; and accordingly for the greater number of mankind there would be absolutely no hope of ever



entering the Kingdom of GOD. If, however, He is, as He says, the Life of the world, then our own merciful, but unreliable inventions, and inferences, and modifications, and qualifications, to break the force of the positive statement, become unnecessary; and we are saved the hazard of adding to or tampering with the word of GOD, if not from making Him who is the Truth itself a liar. Hence, in asserting a mere ceremony to be so essential to regeneration, and to an entrance into the kingdom of GOD, what utter indifference to the salvation of the world at large would we imply in its Creator and professed Saviour! And how utterly useless, nay cruel, would be a universal redemption from Death! And how chary and unbeneficent would be the representation made by the baptismal idea of the dispensation of the Grace of GOD; indicating, moreover, its bestowal through Christ to be no longer free, but purchased by the Works of men! What therefore, in justice to the holy GOD of Love, ought a reasonable man to think of so dishonouring an interpretation of the words of Him, who, in declaring thus positively, and without qualification, the absolute necessity of the regeneration of mankind, declared also with equal positiveness His mission to be to give Life to the world, and that He was sent for this purpose, because, verily, GOD loved the world? And what, moreover, ought we to think of the narrow bigotry, the indifferent heartlessness, and the horrible blasphemy of the ecclesiasticism which could invent such an unseemly interpretation? And if, in addition, even subsequent to the institution of baptism, its administration to the great majority of men has been practically impossible,—as has been patent ever since,—then what far greater reason for reproof attaches to



those who advocate the blasphemous interpretation, than for imagining Jesus to have reproved Nicodemus for not knowing that GOD was so cruel, and was so arbitrarily respective of persons!<sup>1</sup> For that matter, where all alike deserved Death, no plan of regeneration, which was not effective for all sinners irrespectively, can be regarded as showing forth GOD's love for the world, or that He is no respecter of persons. Any bestowal of Life by means that are partial in their effects would demonstrate Him to be as partial as His system, and most certainly to be no lover of the whole world. And accordingly, what mockery would have been the reason given for the mission of Jesus by Himself, to wit, that He would regenerate and save, because "GOD so loved *the world*";<sup>2</sup> or also the inspired declaration that He was a propitiation "for the whole world."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The *quasi* reproof to Nicodemus deprives the advocate of baptismal regeneration of the argument that baptism only became essential when instituted after the resurrection. But it would be enough to disprove GOD's love for the world, if the fact were that He instituted a sacrament through which, only, man could be regenerated; and at the same time its administration to all—in this case to the great majority of the human race—has ever since been impossible. And yet, in the interview, it is GOD's love for the world which is given as the motive of His Gift of renewed Life to men. If, moreover, before the institution of baptism regeneration were effected without a ceremony, then, those who lived before were favoured of GOD. That is, He has respected persons, and Christ's Advent has not been of benefit to men, but has added to the difficulty of gaining Life for all, instead of His being the Life of the world.

<sup>2</sup> St. Paul, we remember, effectually answers the conditional argument, which would make final salvation to depend upon the fleeting conditions of this life, and the mercy of GOD to last just that long. He shows that if GOD loved the unredeemed world, much more does He love the redeemed world, now washed in the Blood of His beloved Son. See Rom. 5.

<sup>3</sup> 1 John 2: 2.

§140. THE UNCOVENANTED MERCIES OF GOD.—To obviate all these and the like vital objections to baptism as a necessity to the regeneration of men, the upholders of the dogma are compelled to resort without authority to the uncovenanted mercies of GOD. To do so does honour to their hearts, but not to their logic. And it is doing honour to their hearts at the expense of the honour due to the LORD. For if, to repeat, in any way man may gain Life without being born of sacramental water, then, when Jesus is represented as declaring the necessity of baptism, He is represented as declaring what, on the supposition, would be obviously not true. And thus, in the very face of His supposed declaration, as well as of their own dogma and purely upon their own authority, the humanity within them, from which they cannot separate themselves, it being a part of their new, godlike nature, compels them to claim, that a necessity, by Him supposed to be stated, and stated without qualification, becomes, under certain circumstances, according to their sense of right, in spite of their interpretation of His statement, no necessity at all. It is in fact a confession that their own interpretation of the words of Him who is the Truth, as well as the Life, is not correct; and that the statement, in its strictness, as by them supposed to be made, would be a libel upon the divine character. They therefore daringly assume, but from the best of motives, to modify the statement of Jesus, as by themselves interpreted, to suit *their better* ideas of GOD. In other words, they admit that their interpretation cannot be made, without playing fast and loose with the words of Jesus as thus interpreted, or, that is to say, without insisting upon or dispensing with them as often as their judgment, or, perhaps, their

partisan interests, may require. Thus are they compelled, in spite of the frequent commands to the contrary, to add to or subtract from the inspired word as they hold it to be revealed, and to admit that persons need not always be born of baptised water to "enter the kingdom of God." <sup>1</sup>

§ 141. BAPTISM AND THE UNIVERSALITY OF SALVATION.—And yet, when our LORD asserted that to enter that kingdom we must be born from above, even of Water and Spirit, He not only put the necessity without qualification, but prefaced His assertion with the strong, emphatic words, "*Truly, truly*, I say unto thee." How much more reverent it would be, as well as consistent, to recognise our LORD to be "verily,"

<sup>1</sup> I cannot but honour, however, those whose divine nature thus asserts itself at the expense both of their logic and of their ecclesiasticism. Very different was the spirit of two individuals who, one Sunday, many years ago, entered the cabin of a ferry boat where I was sitting, one of them shouting exultingly, "Ah-h-h! did not Father — settle well this trashy talk about invincible ignorance? What folly, in this age, when the claims of the Church are so well known, to talk of invincible ignorance!" These unfortunates were evidently felicitating themselves that their ecclesiastical opponents were to burn forever in the fires of hell! These could have no claim to mercy because of ignorance. What delicious satisfaction! The whole manner of the heartless wretches savoured of diabolical glee and proud self-satisfaction. Their worse nature, derived of the devil, was having full swing; and the arch-enemy had reason to gloat in triumph over them. If not following the loving One who came to save the world, they were the strictest followers of the "father" to whom they had been listening; and he too could have gloated in his children. Alas! how easily the minister of Christ degenerates into a minister of evil; preaching, not the *gospel* of love, but the *baspel* of hate! As I could do no good to the strangers I of course was silent. How singular that they should felicitate themselves upon being children of God, just when they were evidencing themselves to be children of the devil!

what He declares Himself, even the Life of *the world*;<sup>1</sup> and that, in the passage in question, He not only affirms what is indeed a strict necessity, but plainly indicates, in *answer* to Nicodemus, that He had come from God to supply that necessity to the full, or for all men. If dogmatists would throw aside all partisanship in the matter, they would perceive how afterwards the Divine Speaker goes on, in explanation, expressly to connect His affirmation with the love of God for *the world*, and with His sending His Son to save *the world*; and that He makes no mention at all of baptism, or even of water, in that explanation, and that instead of making a distinction of those who are baptised from those who are not, His only distinction is between those who continue under judgment, because their deeds are evil, and those who are freed from that judgment, because they have become perfect believers, with deeds that are manifestly wrought in God. And men would see also with what consistency the Bible tells us in express words, first, of the Spirit falling upon men *before* baptism; thus showing that they were already born of the Spirit and could in consequence be moved thereof;<sup>2</sup> and next, of the goodness in general in man, proving at each manifestation of the same that he was thus born; and thirdly, of unbelievers becoming converts; again demonstrating that they had received of the Spirit *before* baptism<sup>3</sup> and that in the convert there is a spiritual being, already begotten of God, to be baptised.<sup>4</sup> Had the answer of Jesus to Nicodemus been so worded as simply to show the necessity of

<sup>1</sup> That is, that He who is "the Truth," and said, "Truly, truly," spake the truth.

<sup>2</sup> Whereas in "the old man" there is no good at all. Rom. 7: 18; 8: 5-10.

<sup>3</sup> Acts 10: 44-48. 1 John 3: 24.

<sup>4</sup> 1 John 2: 29; 4: 9-14.

an humble, obedient spirit to final salvation, and therefore of being baptised; without, however, positively making the sacrament the door of spiritual Life, and, in consequence, indispensable to final salvation; in such a case it would be no contradiction to rest our hopes for the unbaptised upon the mercy of God, which, we are told over and over again, endureth for ever. A passage worded in this manner is that of Mark 16: 16,<sup>1</sup> "He that has believed (*i. e.* to perfection) and been baptized shall be saved: but he that has not believed shall be judged." But the passage which we have had under consideration all along, on the other hand, admits of no loop-hole of escape in respect of the necessity by it proclaimed; and that necessity is also asserted in the strongest manner possible:—"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of Water and Spirit, he *cannot* enter into the kingdom of God." In other words, the passage declares, that except man has a Saviour to save him from Death, he must die. And it obviously implies, in view of the question of Nicodemus, that Jesus had been sent from God to be that Saviour;—an implication which is afterwards confirmed in express words. Furthermore, in the universality of the need thus affirmed by our LORD is implied also the universality of the salvation which He was sent from the irrelative God to effect. And this implication likewise has its confirmation by Him, when He gives the motive of His mission to be God's love for *the world*.

<sup>1</sup> A passage, by the way, considered by some of doubtful authenticity.





## NOTES.

§ 1 (a), (p. 1). I take the following from the manuscript of *The Purpose of the Æons*, referred to in the Preface hereto:

“§ 145. THE ORIGIN OF EVIL IN SIN.—In Sin,<sup>1</sup> and its immediate result, Spiritual Death, or alienation from GOD, we have the origin of all Evil. . . . Final and Utter Destruction may be regarded as the *natural* consequence, the legitimate fruit, of Spiritual Death;<sup>2</sup> and being averted, its substitute of Suffering becomes the *actual* consequence. Hence, the latter is called in the Bible ‘the Second Death,’ because, doubtless, of its being the substitute for Final Death, but, especially, because of its being the actual development of, and therefore succeeding, Spiritual Death.<sup>3</sup> . . . For, as GOD is the sole Source of ‘Life,’ any alienation from Him, in depriving that which is alienated of Life, produces of course immediate ‘Death,’ according to the extent of the alienation. In fact, the Death, so produced, but for Redemption, would have immediately eventuated in the utter destruction of the sinner: just as, with Redemption, it actually eventuates in, or has for its result, the Second Death.

“§ 146. THE SPIRITUAL CONCEPTION OF DEATH.—The spiritual eye of man not being opened to discern the purely spiritual state of alienation from GOD, we only become sensible of Death having been produced in us, when it makes itself apparent to the eye of sense. There must be some outward and visible sign of the inward and spiritual disaster which stops the flow of Life; or Death is to us as if it had not occurred. But when the vigour of Life wholly or in part abates, and Destruction wholly or in part takes

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<sup>1</sup> Or, rather, *Sinfulness*. I use the term “Sin,” because it is the familiar one of our English versions; understanding by it, however, *Sinfulness*.

<sup>2</sup> That is, in the Biblical sense; or that we “were by nature children of wrath”: for in general, of course, that only is *natural*, which is in accordance with the order of things as *actually* experienced in nature.

<sup>3</sup> Rev. 2: 11; 20: 6, 14; 21: 8. Jude 5, 12.

its place, then we become vividly conscious of the mortal change which has happened; and to the outward manifestation, rather than to Death itself, we give the name. But, in a spiritual sense, Death is that which cuts off the living being from Him from whom all Life proceeds; and the outward manifestation of the fact is rather a second Death, which may be complete, or which may be partial. But the complete form being abolished, the partial becomes that which alone is possible and actual, and accordingly appropriates to itself, exclusively, the title of the second Death.<sup>1</sup>

“§ 147. SPIRITUAL DEATH.—To illustrate: Spiritual Death is the girdling which cuts off a tree from its Root and Source of Life. The Second Death is the visible Decay and blighted condition of the tree which ensue.

“Final Death would of course be its Utter and Complete Destruction.

“This Death, however, in respect to mankind, is prevented by the insuperable obstacle which has been interposed to the natural effect of the complete girdling of the human tree by the indestructible Link or ‘Branch’<sup>2</sup> which connects the tree with the Root.<sup>3</sup> In other words, Christ Jesus is an eternal Link or Bond of connection between God and man; and through Him the Holy Spirit (to return to our metaphor) imparts the Life-giving juices which sustain the tree in Life, and whereby its eventual restoration to Health is effected.

“§ 148. THE FIRST DEATH.—From this it will be seen that, in all strictness, the true First Death, which is the immediate or primary result of an act of Sin, is the Death which consists in a state of alienation from God. And, cutting off, as Sin does, him who commits it from the Great Source of all our living powers from Him in whom ‘we live, and move, and have our being,’<sup>4</sup> the severance is sure to be speedily followed by the horrors of the Second Death; and in exact accordance with the extent of the

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<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, St. Jude says (illustrating the fact that judgment upon the sinner follows upon redemption), “that the LORD, having saved people out of the land of Egypt, the second time (*τὸ δεύτερον*) destroyed them that believed not”: and so, he speaks of the wicked, a few verses after, as “twice dead.” Jude 5, 12. So Goliath is killed with the stone (the First Death), and with the sword (the Second). 1 Samuel 17: 50, 51.

<sup>2</sup> Is. 11: 1; 4: 2. Jer. 23: 5, 6; 33: 15, 16. Zech. 3: 8, 9; 6: 12, 13. Ps. 110: 2.

<sup>3</sup> Rev. 5: 5; 22: 16. Is. 11: 1, 10. Rom. 15: 12.

<sup>4</sup> Acts 17: 28.

severance. Just as the obstruction of the healthful flow of blood from the heart results in physical disorders in proportion to the obstructing cause. But as the unseen obstruction is one thing, and the visible disorders caused by it quite another, so the invisible state of alienation from God caused by Sin is a very different Death from the visible forms of Death which are actually produced by it, and to which visible forms in general, however numerous or diversified they may be, is applied the appellation of the Second Death.

“§ 149. THE APOCALYPTIC VISION OF DEATH.—Hence, in the representation of Death on the pale horse, and of Hell following with him, in the Apocalyptic Vision, it is very evidently, in the one case, a Spiritual Death of alienation from God, and, in the other, the disastrous consequences attendant thereupon, which are respectively depicted.<sup>1</sup> In other words, Spiritual Death goes before, and Hell follows in close and constant attendance; thereby justifying its title of the Second Death. In short, the latter is death as actually manifested to the senses and experience; or Death, not in any abstract or spiritualised sense, but in its visible and concrete form, whatever that form may be, and *whenever and wherever* it may be exhibited, whether in this æon, or in the æon to come;—that is to say, including all suffering, corruption, and degradation, here or hereafter. It is therefore the *judgments* which follow upon the state produced by Sin, rather than the state itself; the latter being in fact what the Bible, which usually goes straight to the sources of things, commonly denominates by the simple term ‘Death.’ It is the latter state, accordingly, or the Spiritual Death of alienation from God, which is distinguished in the Scriptures by such words as ‘Darkness,’ or ‘Outer Darkness’;<sup>2</sup> while the Second Death refers rather to the ‘stumbling’ of him who walketh in that darkness.”<sup>3</sup>

§ 3 (a), (p. 7). THE PSALMIST AND THE THREE SALVATIONS.—The Psalmist (116: 7-9) sings prophetically of the three salvations: “Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee. For Thou hast delivered my soul from *Death*, mine eyes from *Tears*, and my feet from *Falling*. I will walk before the LORD in the land of the living” (even where there shall be no more Sorrow, or Crying, or Death. Rev. 21: 4). And again (56: 12, 13): “Thy vows are upon me, O GOD: I will render praises

<sup>1</sup> Rev. 6: 8.

<sup>2</sup> Compare, for example, 1 John 2: 8-11 with 3: 14, 15, and 6.

<sup>3</sup> See John 11: 8-10. 1 John 2: 10.

unto Thee. For Thou hast delivered my soul from *Death*: wilt not Thou deliver my feet from *Falling*, that I may walk before GOD in the *Light* of the living?" And Isaiah repeats (25: 8): "He will swallow up *Death* in victory; and the LORD GOD will wipe away *Tears* from off all faces; and the *Reproach* (*i. e. Sinfulness*) shall He take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it."

Among the countless illustrations of the subject which fill the pages of the Bible I may mention the three days of our LORD's entombment. The first of these days was that of His Death—an evident showing forth of our Salvation from Death. The second, the only full, complete day, was that of the preaching to the sinful spirits in prison, the sealing of the stone, the scriptural type of the death caused by Sin, and the setting of the watch. It told of the long æon of Sinfulness during which it is impossible for man to attain his final resurrection. Accordingly, the illustrative day could not be shortened a single moment. But as the only purpose of suffering is to make man perfect, why, after the æon of imperfection is over, should there not at once be the Salvation from Woe? Hence the third illustrative day is only long enough to make its figurative character manifest. While it was still dark, even before the dawn, the tomb was found vacant, with the sealing stone rolled away, and the watching soldiers gone.

In Nature also the illustrations are innumerable; a suggestive one being that of a tree, in beauteous Life, with its Roots, Trunk and Branches. In fact, all nature exists in just three conditions—that of a solid, a liquid, or a gas; and its every visible form must have at least three sides. Spiritual Life is, however, best denoted in such figures as the Bud, the Blossom, and the Fruit; or, the Infant, the Youth, and the Man.

§ 10 (a), (p. 20). *ÆONIC CONCEPTIONS*.—The following examples of *aiōnios* will illustrate, as in the case of the noun, its *normally* temporal meaning, to wit:—LXX.—Gen. 17: 8 promises to Abraham and his seed the land wherein he dwelt for an *aiōnic* possession. And yet, subsequently, this possession was found to be dependent upon and correlated with their conduct. See 17: 19; 48: 4. Lev. 26: 33–45. Deut. 4: 25–31; 28: 63, 64; 29: 22–28. 1 Ch. 16: 17. Ps. 105: 8–11. Ezek. 36: 2. Neh. 1: 8, 9. Esth. 4: 17. Gen. 17: 13, Circumcision called an *aiōnic* covenant; yet the rite ended with redemption and justification. Gal. 5: 1–6. Ex. 12: 14, 17, the keeping of the passover made an *aiōnic* law, but not one that was everlasting. 1 Cor. 5: 7, 8, the priesthood of Aaron and his descendants made *aiōnic*, but now ended; and so of the things severally connected therewith. Ex. 27: 21; 28: 43; 29: 28; 30: 21.

Lev. 6: 18, 22; 7: 34, 36; 10: 9, 15; 16: 29, 34; 17: 7; 24: 3, 8, 9. Numb. 10: 8; 18: 8, 11, 19; 25: 13. Sirac. 45: 15, mistakes, or speaks figuratively, of the duration of this *æonic* priesthood by adding, that it is as the days of heaven; which is only actually true, not of the Levitical priesthood, but of that of Christ. 1 Mac. 2: 54, speaks of the *æonic* priesthood of Phinehas also, and as expressly covenanted. For *æonic* religious observances required or observed of the people, but now obsolete, see Lev. 23: 14, 21, 31, 41. Numb. 15: 15; 19: 10, 21. Tobit 1: 6. Lev. 25: 34, speaks of cities of the Levites as their *æonic* possession; and Numb. 18: 23 of an *æonic* law relating to that tribe. Ps. 76: 6 (77: 5), "I have considered days of old, and ancient (*æonic*) years." See also Is. 63: 11. Prov. 22: 28, "Remove not the ancient (*æonic*) landmarks which thy fathers have set." See also the same command in 23: 10. Is. 58: 12, "Thy old (*æonic*) desolate places shall be built up (which could not be of "everlasting" desolation), and thy foundations shall be *æonic* (*i. e.* from age to age, or from life to life) for generations of generations"; or not for ever. See, too, 61: 4; 60: 15, prophesies *æonic* joy for generations of generations (*i. e.*, from life to life). Jer. 18: 15, 16, "Because my people have forgotten me, have even burned incense in an empty (spirit), they shall tread stumblingly on their journeys the *æonic* rush-places, going upon by-tracks, having no road for a passage; having put their land to desolation, and an *æonic* hissing." Ezek. 35: 5, mentions the *æonic* (old perpetuated) hatred of Esau's descendants for Jacob's. Passages also apply "æonic" to the duration of mountains, hills, the covenant of the rainbow, etc.

N. T.—Rom. 16: 25, "kept secret in *æonic* (ancient) times." 2 Th. 2: 16, "*æonic* consolation"—a phrase not applicable to those in the bliss of heaven, who therefore need no consolation. 2 Tim. 1: 9, "before *æonic* times." Shows again *æonic* joined with *times*, and these to have ended. So Tit. 1: 2. As therefore applied to "life" or "destruction," "æonic" has a graded sense correlated in duration and quality with the character of the person being blessed or destroyed. This will appear more and more as we proceed. I have given the correlated sense of "æonic" a larger treatment in *The Purpose of the Æons*.

§ 13 (a), (p. 25). ILLOGICAL CONCEPTION OF SIN.—I. What a ridiculous argument is that of some, who contend that a sin against the Infinite (which all sin is) is an infinite sin; which means, that sin, like God, is infinite, and that if I put myself in opposition to anything I become that thing! What is against the Infinite becomes infinite. If I strike a pump, I become a pump. If I oppose the Bible, I am a Bible; if then the devil, I am a devil! With ordinary people



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the exact opposite is the truth; namely, that if I follow the devil, I become a devil; and if I oppose him, it is godlike. But moreover, to make a *finite* man contain an *infinite* sin (!) which cannot have an end whatever GOD may do, is to ascribe superior godlike qualities to that which is wholly of the devil, and therefore pays honour to him, rather than to GOD! But here let me note a distinction, lest some should be confused. To sin against GOD does indeed prove that I have an independent free-will, and within its sphere am a god; just as the devil suggested to Eve; but that is because of the free-will, which is of GOD, not because of the sin, which is of the devil.<sup>1</sup> While the former proves me godlike, the latter proves me devilish. So "the man of sin" may usurp the throne of God in the heart of man, but he does not therefore hold that throne forever. It is one thing to pretend; it is quite another to be. It is one thing to usurp, as it were, divine attributes; but quite another for the pretender to be the God that he pretends to be.

2. The argument for the infinity of sin was accordingly a ridiculously lame device, whereby theologians thought to justify its infinite punishment, both in degree and duration. The argument, in fact, is utterly opposed to the explicit revelations of the Bible, which unmistakably declare the wages of sin to be—Death!—even the final end of the sinner with his sin;—not an existence prolonged by sin to infinity; since this would make sin to beget—to be the Father of—Infinity! The argument however is in striking accord with the ravings of pantheism, which would imagine the sinner in the act of sin to be simply one of the Protean shapes which the Infinite according to this view is constantly assuming. In the face of the inconsistency of basing infinity upon a fleeting act, they in effect proclaim the fleeting act to be infinite, and the sinner to have had his existence infinitely prolonged thereby; or that sin, and not Christ, brought Life and Immortality to light! And thus man's efforts to reason respecting infinity, whether in the case of Christians or avowed pantheists, are alike abortive.

3. The argument once more is in opposition to the Bible in asserting the correction of sin to be a vindictive act, instead of a proof of God's love. For the fundamental and distinguishing feature of Christianity is, that out of love for sinners the Father sent the Son to save them; and not from an infinite existence in a suffering state as the fruit of sin prolonging their lives, but from just the opposite result to this, namely, from Death; from the

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<sup>1</sup> Many read the Bible without perceiving the subtlety of the suggestion which was required to tempt to his undoing an unfallen, godlike creature. Gen. 3:5.



immediate wiping out of existence altogether. Nay, the answer of our LORD Himself to the idea of the infinity of sin is most emphatic. He tells us: "Ye must be born again." "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Surely, if it be true that man must be born again, or from above,<sup>1</sup> it implies in true Bible consistency that he died under sin,—not that sin had made him immortal; as must have been the case for him to contain an infinite sin. And his restoration to Life, after Sin had killed him, was done, we are expressly told, out of love, and therefore had no taint of vindictiveness. Rather, the mercy which could restore an unredeemed sinner to Life will not fail him when redeemed, but will endure forever. The purpose of the restoration will always be kept in view; and no everlasting retribution will ever take the place of the judgment which proves the continuance of redeeming love, and is for that very reason reformatory, and in strict accordance with *finite* deeds, or never for so-called "infinite sin."

§ 15 (a), (p. 30). REASON RECOGNISES MAN'S DUALITY.—How clearly reason alone, apart from revelation, recognises our dual nature, or the old and the new man within us, and their mutual state of incessant hostility, as depicted in Rom. 7, may be illustrated by the interesting incident narrated by Xenophon about Araspes and the beautiful captive intrusted to his charge, whose honour he had attempted in vain to violate. After he had been brought to grief and shame for his breach of trust, Cyrus points out to him how, even because thereof, he could be of great service to him by pretending to desert to the enemy, and gaining a knowledge of their plans. Araspes immediately grasps at the opportunity of proving that he could once again be faithful. Said Cyrus, "And can you leave the beautiful Panthea?" The reply of Araspes has been thus translated:

"Yes, Cyrus; for I have plainly two souls. I have now philosophised this point out by the help of the wicked sophister Love; for a single soul cannot be a good one and a bad one at the same time, nor can it, at the same time, effect both noble actions and vile ones. It cannot incline and be averse to the same thing at the same time; but it is plain there are two souls, and when the good one prevails, it does noble things; when the bad one prevails, it attempts vile things. But now that it has got you for a support,

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<sup>1</sup> The word used has a double meaning, causing Nicodemus to understand "born again," when our Saviour meant, "born from above."

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the good one prevails, and that very much." Instit. of Cyrus, vi., 1, 41.

See §§ 76-78, 124, 124 (b).

§ 22 (a), (p. 41). "ARTICULUS POSITIVUS."—1. From my unpublished *The Purpose of the Æons*, § 280 (a), ¶ 3, I would quote, in respect of the passage "that He might be just and justifying, the (justifying) by Jesus' Faith," in substance, as follows: The Greek article in this passage is called by scholars *articulus postpositivus* (in Greek ἄρθρον ὑποτακτικόν), to distinguish it from the ordinary article prefixed to its noun, or *articulus præpositivus*, in Greek ἄρθρον προτακτικόν. So placed, it has a relative or demonstrative force.<sup>1</sup> Articulus "postpositivus verò dicitur Græcè ὑποτακτικόν, quod Nominibus tantum postponitur, ideòque fungitur officio Pronominis relativi, ut significatio ostendit, ὅς, ἡ, ὃ, δ, qui, quæ, quod." Constantini Rhodocanacidis Chiensis *Tractatus alter de Articulis*. This treatise is inserted at the end of the Cornelii Schrevelii *Lexicon Græco-Latinum*. To illustrate more obviously the relative force of the article as thus used in Rom. 3: 26 we may translate, "that He might be just and justifying, *which latter* is by Jesus' Faith."<sup>2</sup> The idea is a distinction between God's intrinsic justice and His justifying, which is by Jesus' Faith. In Himself He is always righteous; but to make us righteous required the Faith of Christ, even of the Incarnate God. The Greek is, εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτὸν δίκαιον, καὶ δικαιοῦντα τὸν ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ.

2. I append a few additional examples of the *articulus postpositivus*, which are pertinent to our subject. Thus: Rom. 3: 24 (in the same sentence and in immediate connection), "Being

<sup>1</sup> For the referring and demonstrative force of the *articulus præpositivus*, where its noun has been previously used, see § 19, footnote.

<sup>2</sup> Indeed, in the above treatise, the article, when thus placed, is not considered as strictly an article. For a similar example see 2 Tim. 1: 9, which reads literally, "according to His own Purpose and Grace, *the* (latter) having been given us in Christ Jesus before æonic times." Here the reference of the article with its participle (these being in the singular number in the Greek) is not to the Purpose of God, which, of course, was not given to us, but to the Grace, which was given. Hence the article, which makes the distinction, should properly be translated "the latter" (omitting the parentheses), in order to give its true referring force in the original. In this and other cases the use of parentheses or brackets is merely for the information of the reader, that he may see how the article in the several cases is, and should be, translated, es-

justified freely by His Grace through the Redemption *which is*<sup>1</sup> in Christ Jesus." Gal. 2: 20, "By Faith I live, *that* of the Son of God, *who* loved me and gave Himself for me."<sup>2</sup> Col. 2: 12, "Having been together buried in Him in that<sup>3</sup> baptism (*i. e.* of Blood); in whom also ye have been together raised through the Faith of the operation of God,*who*<sup>4</sup> raised Him from the dead." 1 Tim. 1: 13, 14, "I obtained mercy, because, being ignorant, I acted in unbelief. And the Grace of our LORD superabounded, with Faith and Love, *that, namely,*<sup>5</sup> in Christ Jesus." *I. e.*, the apostle contrasts his own helpless *unbelief* with Christ's abundant, all-powerful Faith. This removes the mountain of Death. 2 Tim. 1: 13 is a similar example. Phil. 3: 8, 9, "I have suffered the loss of all things, . . . that I may profit by Christ, and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, *which is*<sup>6</sup> from (works of) law, but *that which* (is) through the Faith of Christ, the Righteousness of GOD by the said Faith."<sup>7</sup> For other examples see Eph.

pecially when occurring after its noun. In an example like 1 Tim. 1: 14, however, the article refers to the whole idea going before, and is to be construed grammatically with the subject of the verb or the leading noun—*i. e.*, with "Grace," and not with "Love," although the latter is the nearest noun; for the Grace and Faith and Love are alike declared to be superabundant in Christ Jesus, and not merely Love;—"that (Grace, with Faith and Love), namely, in Christ Jesus."

<sup>1</sup> Lit. "through the Redemption *the* in Christ Jesus." We may translate as in the text, or, "that, namely, in Christ Jesus"; or, "through the Redemption, the (Redemption), namely, in," etc.

<sup>2</sup> This passage has two examples of the *articulus postpositivus* in immediate succession. The literal is "By Faith I live, *the* of the Son of God, *the* loved me," etc. We may also translate, "*the* (Faith) of the Son of GOD, *the* (Son of God) that loved me," etc.

<sup>3</sup> The referring and demonstrative force of "the" (*articulus præpositivus*).

<sup>4</sup> Lit. "the" (*a. postpositivus*).

<sup>5</sup> Lit. "the"—*i. e.*, "*that* Grace, with Faith and Love, which is in Christ Jesus."

<sup>6</sup> Lit. "mine own righteousness *the* from law, but *the* through Christ's Faith";—two examples again. We may also render, "the (righteousness) from law, but the (Righteousness) through Christ's Faith."

<sup>7</sup> The Greek is, "by *the* Faith"; the *articulus præpositivus* having here a reference back to the Faith of Christ mentioned immediately before.

2: 2, 7; 3: 7. 1 Th. 5: 19, etc. They are of frequent occurrence.<sup>1</sup>

§ 24 (a), (p. 46). LIFE AND THE LAW.—I. In Gal. 3: 21, but for the evident idea of the passage, I should translate with the a. v., "which could have given life," or, with the r. v., "which could make alive." But St. Paul is speaking of the possibility of man, *while still in existence*, keeping some law, so that the result should not be the Death which had ensued through the failure to keep the severely holy law of God. He is not speaking of the *giving* of life, or of the *making* alive after failure, or after men are already *dead* in law, and therefore when they could keep no law, whether the law of holiness or any other. After failure, the glory of keeping law could not of course be man's; and, being dead, no logical supposition could be made as to his keeping of another law to restore himself to life. The supposition refers therefore to the period before his failure and consequent Death, when the glory of the keeping of law might have been man's. If at that time a law, not so difficult to keep, had been possible, by the keeping of which the then living man could have *preserved* the life which he then had, verily, says the apostle, the good God would have given to man the glory of the righteousness of keeping such a law. In other words, the supposition of the passage is not that of a restoration to life after a disastrous failure, but of an avoidance of the failure altogether, and of the consequent glory to a man of living by his own faith as a just or righteous man, instead of having to depend upon the Righteousness of Christ to be *made alive*. It is a supposition of man's *preserving* his own life, if it had been possible, in avoidance of the necessity of having to be redeemed and justified. The Greek word used in the passage may be independently translated in all three of the above ways; and accordingly its exact meaning, as used, must be determined by the context.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For the defining and particularising force of the *articulus præpositivus*, even when used before abstract nouns, see also § 29, next to last footnote. Wherever, in fact, the article has a relative or referring force, to translate it simply "the" would not be a strictly literal translation, inasmuch as it would fail to convey the idea of the original. Thus, in Phil. 3: 9 (in the text) "by the Faith" would not be a correct rendering; but we should say in English "by *the said* Faith," or "by *that* Faith," or "by *His* Faith," or should use some equivalent expression. To omit the article altogether in such cases is not to translate, but to interpret. See § 19, footnote. Also § 41.

<sup>2</sup> It provokes a smile to hear scholars speak of the superior precision of the Greek language over the English. The truth is, very

2. St. Paul in his brief way speaks of the "law" as the possible source of life in his hypothesis. But he means of course, as shown by the whole context, the *keeping* of the law. For the apostle is not so unphilosophic as to suppose, as does the loose language of many modern scientists, that mere law, without an operating agent, can do anything. Law in itself, it should always be borne in mind, is not a self-operating *cause* of action, but only "a *rule* of action," which at all times requires to be enforced. It is in no sense an operating entity, or possessed of itself of the power of producing results, but is merely the rule which the actual operating entity observes. The uniform, so-called, results of the laws of nature, for example, merely manifest how uniform is the never-absent action of the unchangeable God. They are the visible proofs of the Great Power behind them, and of His uniform manner of action; and we call them laws, because His action is ever uniform;—that is, where uniformity in the law remains consistent with His unchangeably godlike nature; which of course is not that of a subject or slave bound to observe the law, but of the Supreme Sovereign, who can always *consistently* adapt His *voluntary* action to the changeful condition of the creature. In our passage, it is man who is supposed to be the operating agent behind the law, and who is to keep the same. And so, for this reason also, his keeping of the hypothetic law must be while he is a living, active entity; or not where his keeping of law has already been tested, and certainly not where, having failed, he is dead under law, and no longer can observe any law whatever. Then, indeed, he must have *life given*; he must be *made alive*; and there can be no more a supposition of his keeping law. That supposition refers exclusively therefore to the time when his life might have been *preserved*. "If there *had been* law given, which could have preserved alive, verily the above mentioned<sup>1</sup> righteousness would have been from law";—that is, instead of from Christ; for man would not then have needed a Redeemer and Justifier.

§ 25 (a), (p. 47). PAULINE CONCEPTIONS.—1. It would assist us the better to understand St. Paul's obscurities, if we should group together some of the numerous contrasted expressions in which he clothes the universality of his ideas; remembering always that each pair of these contrasted expressions, or each one taken singly, naturally, that in some things, here or there, each is superior in precision to the other; but that the advantage is more often with the English; and not unfrequently the superiority claimed for the Greek exists only in the scholar's pedantic imagination.

<sup>1</sup> Lit. "the"; which is equivalent in its referring force to "the above mentioned."



has its respective reference to the great doctrine of Justification of Life, or to Primary Regeneration; which subject he is thus diversely presenting to our attention. For brevity's sake, and to avoid constant repetition, and to give greater interest and life to what he says, he would convey by a single expression, or pair of expressions, in a varied manner, the great fundamental truth, that, in the place of the "old" life, whose sins had overwhelmed it in death, there has sprung up from Christ, by His Faith and Works, through an act of Grace, a "new" immortal life, which man of himself could never have gained by any faith or other works of his own; but which he receives as a pure Gift of Grace from God; a Gift which, being bestowed upon sinners, is not because of anything of merit in them, and therefore is not conditioned upon anything of merit in them, whether faith or other thing, but is given alone because of the merits and death of the Justifier, and is therefore unconditional, or upon all alike, and in equal measure; like all other gifts of Him who is no respecter of persons. Not that God does not recognise merits; for, in respect of progressive regeneration, or the increase of the "new life," the faith of man has its due reward, and so does his every other work. But when the apostle speaks of the Justification of Life, he takes repeated care to tell us that he is not speaking of earnings, but of that which is of necessity purely a Gift, and a Gift to all alike; and some of his contrasted expressions are expressly chosen to illustrate this aspect of the truth.

2. Those expressions which I shall select from St. Paul's writings as conveying in brief all the features of this great doctrine, whether from one aspect or another, are intended as examples, to which the reader may add others. They are on the one hand as follows:—The Gospel, Grace, the Righteousness of God by Faith of Jesus Christ, the Righteousness of God, the Gift of Righteousness, Righteousness, the Righteousness of Faith, the Faith of Jesus Christ, the Faith of Christ, Christ, Faith, the Faith of the Son of God, the Faith of God, the Law of Faith, the Faith, the Faith of Abraham (by way of illustration only, but never otherwise the Faith of the creature), the Spirit, the Spirit of Life, the Quickening Spirit, the Spirit of Adoption, or, better, of Sonship, the New Man, the New Creature, New Things, the Mind of the Spirit, etc., etc.

3. In contrast with these we have the following:—the Law (referring to the moral law,—the pure and perfect law, which man could not keep, which, indeed, is expressly described as "spiritual," "perfect," and "good"), the Commandment, the Law contained in Ordinances, the Works or Deeds of the Law, the Law of Works, Works or Deeds, the Old Man, Old Things, the Flesh, the Body



of Sin, the Body of Death, the Mortal Body, the Law in my Members, the Mind of the Flesh, the Law of Sin and Death, Nature, etc., etc.

4. Not that these expressions, respectively, are the equivalents always of each other by any means; although they often are; but that while each may have its own special sense, it brings our attention to the whole subject from its own special point of view; which is the case also of certain more neutral expressions, such, for example, as "the Righteousness of the Law," or "the Law of Righteousness,"—expressions which call to mind what "Works" could not fulfil, and what Christ did fulfil. Thus it is said, that man, by striving, did not attain unto "the Law of Righteousness," but received Righteousness as a Gift, without effort. And accordingly we have the contrast of "the Law of Righteousness," or "that Righteousness which is of the Law," and "the Righteousness which is through the Faith of Christ," or, more briefly, "the Righteousness of Faith."<sup>1</sup>

5. For the better illustration of the subject, and of the apostle's meaning in the use of these diversified expressions, all relating to the same great fundamental basis of spiritual life, let me couple a few of them as they are employed in contrast with each other. For while they are all familiar enough perhaps, and some of them may be easily recognised as referring either to Primary Regeneration, or to Justification unto Life;<sup>2</sup> as, for example, the Law and the Gospel, or the Law and Grace; others again are generally applied by readers, in an exclusive sense, to the Progressive Life, or to its opposite, to the great misconception of the inspired writer's train of reasoning. The following additional contrasted examples are made the more numerous, therefore, in the hope of correcting somewhat this prevalent tendency. Thus the following also all have for their chief intention the subject of Primary Regeneration, or of Justification by Christ Jesus, in contrast with the impossibility thereof by the Works of men, in due subordination to the apostle's course of thought, to wit:—The Works of the Law *and* the Faith of Jesus Christ, the Righteousness of the Law *and* the Righteousness of God by Faith of Jesus Christ, the Law *and* Faith (*i. e.*, of Jesus Christ), Faith (*i. e.* of Jesus Christ) *and* Works,<sup>3</sup> the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus *and* the Law of Sin and Death, the Law of the Flesh *and* the Law of the Spirit, the Spirit *and* the Flesh, the Mind of the Spirit *and* the Mind of the Flesh, the Carnal Mind *and* the Spiritual Mind, the Carnal *and* the

<sup>1</sup> See Rom. 9: 30, 31; 10: 4. Phil. 3: 6, 9.

<sup>2</sup> Regeneration is the *consequence* of justification and atonement, and is therefore not the *equivalent* of justification.

<sup>3</sup> See Eph. 2: 8-10. Rom. 3: 27, 28, etc.

Spiritual, the Mortal Body *and* the Spiritual Body, the Old Man *and* the New Man, the Body of Death *and* the Spirit of Life, the Body which is dead because of Sin *and* the Spirit which is Life because of Righteousness, (more briefly) the Body of Sin *and* the Spirit of Life, Life *and* Death, Death (the First Death) *and* Resurrection, Death in Christ *and* Life in Him, to Suffer (Death) with Him *and* to be Glorified (in Life) with Him, etc. Some of these contrasts may have, with the inceptive, also a progressive and a perfected sense; but the first is the primary intention, in subordination to the writer's line of thought.

§ 25 (b), (p. 48). THE NECESSITY OF SANCTIFICATION.—1. The necessity of voluntary and perfect sanctification is the constant teaching of the sacred writers. Even in the short epistle of St. Jude we read: "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy Faith, praying in a holy spirit, keep yourselves in the love of GOD, looking to the mercy of our LORD Jesus Christ during (or, *for*) æonic Life." The descriptive "most holy" here is only applicable to the perfect Faith of Christ; which alone can be the sure Foundation on which the sacred writer directs us to build. Indeed, he expressly declares himself to be writing with all diligence of "the common salvation" (v. 3), or of our new birth of Water and the Spirit; and inasmuch as he proclaims the LORD's people of old, after being saved from death, to be because of unbelief "destroyed the second time" (v. 5 of the Greek), and the wicked in general to be "twice dead" (v. 12), he therefore exhorts us to build ourselves up on that most holy Faith which saved us all; even giving us "the common salvation" as a common Foundation for our building, and "a holy spirit" in which to keep ourselves "in GOD's love," and to look to the mercy of the LORD Jesus even of our great Judge, "during æonic Life," or during that æon of judgment when mercy is needed. Compare as follows:<sup>1</sup>

2. 2 Th. 2:13, "GOD hath from the beginning chosen you for salvation by sanctification of spirit and (the) Faith of (the) Truth"; or, omitting the inserted articles, "Truth's Faith;" or again, and as literally, "belief of truth"; this, however, being not only tautological, but an omission of the *primary Source* of our election *from the beginning*,—a Source which in such statements by the N. T. writers invariably receives prominent notice.<sup>2</sup> The idea is,

<sup>1</sup> I select examples in which the meaning is sometimes misunderstood.

<sup>2</sup> Eph. 1:4-6; 3:2-5, 9. Rom. 16:25, 26. 1 Cor. 2:5-8. Col. 1:26-28. 2 Tim. 1:8-10. Tit. 1:2, 3. 1 Pet. 1:2, 17-23. Rev. 13:8; 17:8.

therefore, Christ's Faith and the sanctifying Spirit (the latter being implied), as the Foundation; and then, also, (through good works) "Sanctification of spirit" in each individual case, as the Superstructure; like as the same writer teaches in 1 Cor. 3:8-17. The phrase "sanctification of spirit," without an article to give definiteness, evidently means a spirit which is to be sanctified, but implies, of course, the Spirit who is the Sanctifier.

3. In Tit. 3:5 we have first, as usual, a statement of the Foundation:—"through a washing of regeneration and a renewing of a holy spirit."—It is not a washing by material water, but by the Water of Life; giving us a birth into everlasting Life of Water and the Spirit, and so the Salvation from Death. Indeed, in express terms it is represented as a salvation *of the past*, and according to the mercy of God our Saviour; or "not because of works, those in righteousness which we have done"; but solely because of our Justification by Grace, and consequent heirship of eternal Life. With emphasis it is added: "Reliable is that<sup>1</sup> statement; and by reason of these things I will have thee affirm confidently, that they who have believed GOD be careful<sup>2</sup> to set value on good works. These are good and profitable unto men" (v. 8). And so we have the Superstructure.

4. 1 Pet. 1:1, 2, "elect . . . through<sup>3</sup> sanctification of spirit, because of<sup>4</sup> (the) obedience and sprinkling of (the) blood of Jesus

<sup>1</sup> Lit, "the," with its usual referring force.

<sup>2</sup> Or, "of these things I will have thee keep affirming confidently; in order that they who have believed GOD may be careful" etc. See § 124; also the rendering of vv. 4-7 in § 12, footnote.

<sup>3</sup> Or, *by virtue of*, or *in*, or *in regard of*, or *through*, etc.

<sup>4</sup> In the main, the normal meaning of *eis* is *for*; but after verbs of motion generally *into*, *to*, or *in*, and less often than these *unto*. Both *eis* and the English "for" correspond in general very closely in meaning, and even in such examples as, "they departed *for* (or *into*) their own country another way" (Matt. 2:12). Other instances of the use of *eis* are: "good *for* nothing";—"good *for* food."—"Take nothing *for* your journey." Luke 9:3—"For (*because of*) what (*i. e.*, Why) hath this waste of the ointment been made?" Mk. 14:4. This sense of purpose or object, and also of cause (as in the case of the English "for"), is very frequent; "why" or "wherefore," for example, often being our rendering for the literal "*for (eis) what?*" With words of time *eis* signifies *for*, or *during*, or *at* the time, or never "unto" in the sense of "until" the time. This is a matter of incalculable importance in the rendering of many Bible passages, as will again and again appear. The absence of a deferring sense from *eis* settles the question of a post-

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Christ"—literally, "Jesus Christ's obedience and sprinkling of blood."—Thus far this passage also tells only of what is fundamental. It is the consistent echo of St. Peter to the various utterances of his "beloved brother Paul"; the passage declaring those of the Dispersion sojourning in various parts of Asia Minor to be elect "by foreknowledge of God" through sanctification of spirit because of the Life of Righteousness and the Death of Jesus Christ. But the apostle goes on to proclaim how this is the enduring Foundation of a final salvation ready to be revealed at last, and rejoices therein, "though now for a brief season, if need be," he says, we are distressed by varied temptations, and our faith tried by fire; thus in turn introducing the necessary Superstructure, and following it up at length.

5. Heb. 6 : 4, 5, "have tasted of the Heavenly Gift (Christ, who is our Life), and been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good Word of GOD,<sup>1</sup> and the powers of the life to come, and have fallen away," etc. And then follows, as usual, a proclaiming of the necessity of a fiery judgment, to incite the unproductive soul to superstructural work.

6. 2 Pet. 1 : 1-5, "Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have had allotted a common precious faith with us in the Righteousness of our God and Saviour<sup>2</sup> Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied in the knowledge of GOD and of Jesus our LORD; forasmuch as His Divine Power hath given us all things that pertain to Life and Godliness, through His<sup>3</sup> knowledge that<sup>4</sup> hath called us by (or, *through*) His own Glory and Virtue;<sup>5</sup> whereby have been given us promises that are precious and exceeding great; that through these we may become partakers of a divine nature, having escaped the corruption (*i. e.* Death) that through (or, *by reason of*) lust is in the world.<sup>6</sup> Yea, and for this very

poned judgment day, and gives a common-sense meaning to the many passages which tell of the speedy coming of the LORD in judgment.

<sup>1</sup> See 1 Pet. 1 : 25.

<sup>2</sup> The literal rendering;—like to v. 11 and 3 : 18. And see 2 : 20 and 3 : 2.

<sup>3</sup> Lit. "the."

<sup>4</sup> Lit. "of the"—*i. e.*, "through *the* knowledge of *him that*," etc.

<sup>5</sup> Some authorities leave out "His own." So the a. v.; which also, in using "to" for "by," fails to ascribe the glory and virtue to Christ, the GOD-Man. The r. v. translates "by his own," etc. The preposition is *en*, and often, like its twin-fellow *eis*, has a causal and an instrumental sense; here, *through*, *by*, or *by reason of* "His own" (*idia*), etc.

<sup>6</sup> "Having escaped." That is, the escape was in the past from

cause, having brought to your aid all diligence, ally<sup>1</sup> with (or, *in* [*en*]) your faith virtue"; etc. That is to say, the apostle again first tells of the Foundation, and then of the Superstructure, as in his former epistle. It is first the Faith of Christ, or His Righteousness, whence we have all things pertaining to Life and Godliness, with exalted promises; and then, and because of such gifts and promises, he urges, among other things, "Wherefore, the more, brethren, give diligence to make<sup>2</sup> your calling and election sure: for these things doing ye shall never be falling; for thus shall be richly supplied<sup>3</sup> unto (or, provided for) you the way into the eternal kingdom of our LORD and Saviour Jesus Christ."

the Death that is in the world, or in "the old man" within us all. The passage is a reminder of Jas. 1:15, "Then the lust having conceived produceth sin: and the sin, when accomplished, bringeth forth Death." See also 1 Cor. 15:50-57. 1 John 2:16, 17; 4:3, 4; 5:4, 19.

<sup>1</sup>The verb in the a. v. is rendered here *add*; elsewhere *minister*,—in the r. v. here *supply*. Derivatively the idea is *lead on the chorus*; metaphorically, *combine*, *associate*, *ally*; and so, *contribute*, *supply*, *provide*, etc. The chorus on the present occasion may be said to be faith, virtue, knowledge, self-restraint, endurance, godliness, brotherly kindness and love; with faith as the leader, and love as the finisher of the new Life.

<sup>2</sup>Codex A, and other MSS., have "make through your good works your calling," etc.

<sup>3</sup>The same verb before rendered (in view of the context) "ally," the r. v. renders here "supplied." It is an alliance with, or a contribution from on high to, our works;—in this, true to the derivative idea of the word; we being therein "God's fellow-workers" (1 Cor. 3:9; 2 Cor. 6:1. Acts 15:4). The metaphysical senses of the Greek verb would naturally arise from its use in slang. Just as in English one of a free heart offering to bear all expenses in a common matter might say, "I'll furnish the band," or, "I'll provide the music," or, "I'll pay the piper"; so a Greek might say, "I'll supply the chorus." And then it would only remain for the slang of one generation to become the classic language of another. The freeness and fulness of the supply lingers in the metaphorical meanings of the word as used by the apostle. Here it is emphasised in the "richly." The "add" of the a. v. in v. 5, should consistently have been used here, and would have been as "added" much better than its "ministered," or than other words which make no obvious reference to a joint undertaking, or to man as working and God as helping and rewarding. The scriptural, symbolic number for new life is eight; and there can be no harm in noting that there are just



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§ 35 (a), (p. 66). THEOLOGICAL ERROR FROM ROM. 5: 18.—Rom. 5: 18. (See also 3: 23, 24.) The *apparent* ambiguity of the Greek has led the r. v. into theological error in this passage; for that version would make our justification to depend upon a single act of righteousness, instead of upon the entire righteous life of Christ unto death. Literally, indeed, in the verse, we might translate “through *one* transgression,” as well as “through *one’s* transgression”; and “through *one* righteousness,” as well as “through *One’s* righteousness”; and it is one of the many examples which, contrary to what pedantry affects, show the surpassing clearness of the English language at times over the Greek. However, the ambiguity is only apparent, and the translation of the a. v. is clearly correct. Without commenting on the awkwardness of “one righteousness,” which forced the r. v. to translate “one act of righteousness,” it hardly seems possible to a reader of the *whole context* to change abruptly from the continual repetitions about one *person* (Adam or Christ) to translating in an isolated instance “one trespass” (r. v.) and “one righteousness,” especially where we are compelled by so doing to “revise” to “one (act of) righteousness”! For just as in the immediately preceding verses (15–17) we had, according to the r. v.’s own translation, the phrases, “the trespass of the one,” “the gift by grace of the one man, Jesus Christ,” “one that sinned,” “the judgment (came) of one unto condemnation,” “by the trespass of the one, death reigned through the one,” “in life through the one, (even) Jesus Christ”;—in all which instances one *man*, Adam or Christ, is referred to;—and just as, straightway after (verse 19), also according to the r. v., we have, “For as through the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the one shall the many be made righteous”; so in verse 18 right between these several expressions, and pursuant to the same idea, as shown by the beginning of the verse,<sup>1</sup> it becomes literally, “through one’s transgression,” and “through One’s Righteousness.” How incongruous, as well as incorrect, is therefore the translation of the r. v., although beginning with “So then”! It reads: “So then as through one trespass (instead of *one’s* trespass) (the judgment came) unto all men to condemnation (mark this; for “*all men*” are contrasted with *one man*, not with *one trespass*); even so through one act of righteousness (it is literally, as mentioned above, ‘through One’s Righteousness’) (the free gift came) unto all men (it is the same contrast of *all men* with *one man* as before) to justification of life.”<sup>2</sup>

eight members of St. Peter’s chorus of good works to which he would urge us in consequence of the gift to us of the new life.

<sup>1</sup> “Therefore” (a. v.), “So then” (r. v.).

<sup>2</sup> See § 23.



§ 42 (a), (p. 81). ÆONIC JUDGMENT.—The unavoidable-ness of æonic Judgment, because of the Salvation from Death, or the unpardonable condition of the sinful, is shown, with the usual consistency of revelation, along with æonic Hope, in Heb. 6; which is as follows:

“Wherefore leaving off the discussion of<sup>1</sup> the Beginning, (which is) of the Christ,<sup>2</sup> let us go on unto the Finishing;<sup>3</sup> not laying again a

<sup>1</sup> Or, “our discourse concerning.”

<sup>2</sup> “The Beginning of the Christ,” or, “the Christ’s Beginning,” is here put in direct contrast with “the Finishing”; in which latter only our repentance, faith, etc., have their part. For the “Finishing” here intended is each one’s Superstructure. But the Finishing of the Faith which laid for us the Foundation was, like “the Beginning,” of the Christ. As it is said in this very epistle, “Jesus the Beginner and Finisher of the Faith.” What a misconception to render “of our faith” in place of the literal “of *the* faith” of this passage! Obviously, it is the Faith of Him who is declared to be its Beginner and Finisher. And it is consistently styled “*the* Faith” in striking contrast with that of mere man, which repeatedly (23 times) in the preceding chapter had received even emphatic commendation without the article; and only with it once at the close, where it is used for “their.” Moreover, to represent Jesus as the author and finisher (a. v.) or perfecter (r. v.) “of *our* faith” is to introduce compulsion into the Bible, contrary to its consistent free-will teaching. And it contradicts the rest of the passage; for why should we therein be exhorted, if our faith must be begun and finished for us? In that case what can we do? The only consistent view is, that the race was set before us, just as in fact the sacred writer himself says, and by One able to begin and finish the necessary Faith for that purpose, and that thereafter “the Finishing” lies in the running of that race; to which accordingly we are urged. Giving the passage literally as in the Greek, (although, it may be, preferring here or there some neater rendering of the versions,) we read: “Wherefore let us also, having so great a cloud of witnesses encompassing us about, having put aside every weight and our (lit. *the*) easily besetting sin, run with endurance (see the same word presently as “endured”) the race set before us, looking unto Jesus the Beginner and Finisher of the Faith; who for the joy set before Him endured a cross, having despised shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” Heb. 12: 1, 2.

<sup>3</sup>The Douay v.’s “unto things more perfect” (translating the Latin Vulgate instead of the Greek original) is horrible. What can be more perfect than “Christ’s Beginning”? Surely we need an absolutely perfect Foundation. There is no such idea as “things

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foundation<sup>1</sup> of repentance from dead works;<sup>2</sup> and of faith in God,<sup>3</sup>

more perfect" in the original Greek. There it is "the Finishing"—a noun in the singular number.

<sup>1</sup> N. B.—"a f.";—so the Greek and the r. v.; but the a. v. and the Douay v., wrongly "the f." There is no article in the Greek. And very properly; for the things mentioned, repentance, faith, teaching, etc., belong to the Finishing, and are not to be laid as a foundation; and for the Hebrew converts addressed to be laying them again as a foundation would be to forsake the Foundation laid by Christ, and to return "again" to their anti-Christian faith of Works. Note the consistency of inspiration.

<sup>2</sup> Or, "from works of the dead."—But how, pray, can the dead do works? How effect their own resurrection? Thus, whichever way we translate, our works are considered as dead, and (without Christ) as of the dead; and so, impossible to be laid as a foundation of Life. Nay, rather, they caused our Death; and after being killed by them, it is too late to lay a foundation of repentance from them. But now that the one only Foundation, which is Christ our Life, has been laid, and we have the Gift of Life through Him through whom alone all godly Life must come, or after "the Christ's Beginning," then all subsequent works properly belong to his Superstructure, or to "the Finishing." And of course this is true of our Baptism, which, with our faith, is one of the works named. Baptism illustrates, teaches, and builds up; but it does not regenerate. And accordingly we may well say, "the teaching of baptisms and of laying on of hands," whether it be a correct translation in the above text or not. But it is the God-Man who begets in us the Water of Life, or causes us to be born of Water and the Spirit, and altogether independently of human works, whether of man's faith or of any adventitious or fortuitous reception of baptism or other ceremony on the part of man.

<sup>3</sup> The sacred writer, as usual, omits the emphasising article before "faith," where the faith is ours. The word occurs in the epistle 32 times, and only four of these with the article; to wit: 12:2, where it is the Faith of Him who is its Beginner and Finisher; 11:39, in the phrase, "And these all . . . through *their* faith; 13:7, in the phrase, "*the* faith of whom,"—*i. e.*, as translated, "whose faith"; and 4:2, in the phrase, "not being mixed with *the same* faith"; the need of faith by the people in the wilderness having been previously mentioned. Or, perhaps, (see Rom. 10:17), we should translate, "not being blended (or, *mixed*) with *their* faith in those that heard." Codex "D," with other authorities, reads, "not being blended with the faith of those that heard."

of (the) teaching of baptisms and laying on of hands,<sup>1</sup> and of a resurrection of the dead and of æonic judgment.<sup>2</sup> And this will

<sup>1</sup> Or, "of baptisms, of teaching, and of laying on of hands,"—a strictly literal rendering, and following the order of the Greek.

<sup>2</sup> As rendered in the text six things are separately named,—an appropriate number for "the Finishing," or period of "Works." In the preceding note there are seven; a number telling more surely of "Finishing," and so properly including our final resurrection to the life of Heaven, or from the Second Death; just as our primary resurrection was from the First. I have followed the r. v. in the text in translating "of (the) teaching of," etc.; but prefer the rendering in the preceding note. And, among other things, first, because of the order of the words in the Greek; and, secondly, because the latter reading is so strictly literal as not even to require, like the former, the addition to the Greek of "the" before teaching. The omission of the article before both "resurrection" and "dead" in the phrase "of a resurrection of dead (men)," as is the literal, may have been because the writer had in view a several attainment of resurrection of individuals, each in his own order (1 Cor. 15:23), and not at all any general resurrection of all the dead at the same time; for if this had been his idea, then the phrase "the resurrection of the dead" would have been his natural form of expression; whereas the avoidance of the phrase shows in relation to the Finishing another idea to have been uppermost in his mind. In fact, the enumeration of "a resurrection" with things belonging to "the *Finishing*" indicates at once that the sacred writer is not speaking of the primary resurrection to Life and Immortality, which is of the Foundation, or of "the Christ's Beginning," but of a resurrection from the Second Death, even of those who are dead while they live (1 Tim. 5:6);—a resurrection which, unlike the other, is not of the past, and of all at the same time, but which has an obvious correlated connection with æonic judgment. In Eph. 5: 13-17 we read: "But all things exposed under the light are made manifest: for all is light that is made manifest. Wherefore (he) saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee. Look therefore carefully how ye walk, not as unwise, but as wise; redeeming the time because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not senseless, but understand what the will of the LORD is." Of the seven things of the Finishing the first *five*, the proper symbolic number, represent the works of man, and the other two those of Christ and the Spirit. Apart from teaching, which in the Greek occupies the fourth, or central position, the things are given in pairs; first, repentance and faith, or inward religion; then baptisms and laying on of hands,

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we do,<sup>1</sup> if at least God permit.<sup>2</sup> For it is impossible to renew representing outward religion; and lastly, resurrection and judgment. In addition, Baptism tells of Grace and of the First Resurrection, or the Gift of Life through Christ; while the laying on of hands is expressive of "Works," and of the "æonic judgment" of the Spirit, or of the judgment which from æon to æon keeps even pace with Sinfulness, ever inexorably insisting that every man shall be perfect in his deeds. Often, indeed, the conditions of this life necessitate a transference to another, where sinfulness still finds itself unforgiven, and exposed to æonic judgment.

<sup>1</sup> Or, "should we do"; some authorities using the indicative, and some the subjunctive.

<sup>2</sup> *If at least God permit.* This would seem to relate to æonic judgment and our former life, and, too, to the awful necessity of that temporal election of some to suffer for others through the providential circumstances daily visible around us. If in the fall of our race, or during the æons of the past, some have been instrumental in pulling their fellows down, it is but just that out of the common pit of destruction these evil ones should have put upon them in the Finishing the most terrible burden of all in pushing their betters up. If, on the other hand, it is ours to have a more favorable election, what a blessed privilege, what a glorious opportunity it is, to "go on unto the Finishing"! Verily, if God so permit, then "to Him be glory both now and for a day of an æon." 2 Pet. 3:18. But shall we have the same permission in the next æon, or become in our turn of the non-elect, and not be permitted to "go on unto the Finishing"? The matter rests with ourselves; and the judgment of the coming æon will be according to our deeds in this. "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for the æons." Matt. 6:13. The wise preacher said, "God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions." Ec. 7:29. How many æons may have possibly been ours, since we began to follow our own devices? How many may yet remain? Is it then ourselves, who were once upright angels in heaven, who have been cast down to earth (Rev. 12:9), even to a Tartaric hell, "for a judgment of a great day" (2 Pet. 2:4. Jude 6)? Certain it is, that, notwithstanding our knowledge of the truths of the Gospel and our taste of heavenly gifts, it is impossible to renew us again to repentance, without the constant administration of æonic judgment according to our deeds. As presently to be said in the chapter, we are like bad land, producing only thorns and thistles, whose end is in burning. Such are the terrible inducements put before us in Holy Writ, to urge us to hasten the day of God (2 Pet. 3:7-13), or that resurrection from the Second Death,

again unto repentance those who have once been enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly Gift, and have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost,<sup>1</sup> and have tasted the good Word of God, and the powers<sup>2</sup> of the life<sup>3</sup> to come, and have fallen away; seeing they have crucified in themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame. For land which hath drunk the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them for whose sake it is also tilled, receiveth therewith a blessing from God: but when bearing thorns and thistles, it is adulterated-like, and nigh unto a curse; thereof the end<sup>4</sup> is in burning.<sup>5</sup> But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that follow hard on to salvation, though we thus speak. For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and the love which ye have shewed for His name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that each one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end:<sup>6</sup> that ye be not sluggish, but imitators of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. For when God made promise to Abraham, since He could swear by none greater, He swore by Himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, having patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men swear by the greater; and unto them of every controversy the oath for confirmation<sup>7</sup> is final.<sup>8</sup> Wherein God, being minded more

for the attainment of which St. Paul so laboriously strove (Phil. 3: 10-21). If then in this life God permit, let us heed the apostle when he says: "And we also working together (with Him—*i. e.*, Christ) do beseech you not to have received the Grace of God in vain. (For He saith, . . . behold, now is a day of salvation.)" 2 Cor. 6: 1, 2. Are we candidates for debasement in the next æon, or for high exaltation therein;—aye, it may be, for heaven? If at least God permit, let us, indeed, go on unto the Finishing.

<sup>1</sup> Or, literally, and more correctly, "of a holy spirit," thus referring to our better nature, that sonship to God, of which we "have been made partakers," while of the other things we only taste. <sup>2</sup> *I. e.*, inspiring energies. <sup>3</sup> Æon.

<sup>4</sup> *I. e.*, result. "Whereof" refers to the curse on the land, not to the land as having a final end.

<sup>5</sup> The word translated "adulterated-like," for lack of a more appropriate word, is applied to alloyed metals which need burning for their purification. The land, because of its products (works), is nigh unto a curse, and at last must have the thorns and thistles burnt out of it to become acceptable.

<sup>6</sup> A Greek idiom for "unto perfection."

<sup>7</sup> Or, "in settlement." <sup>8</sup> Or, "a finality," which is more literal.



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abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, became a mediator<sup>1</sup> by oath: that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for GOD to lie, we may have strong encouragement, who have fled for refuge,<sup>2</sup> to lay hold of the hope set before us; which, as an anchor of the soul, we have, both sure and steadfast, even entering into the inner side of the veil; whither a Forerunner for us has entered, (even) Jesus, having become a high priest for ever<sup>3</sup> after the order of Melchizedek."<sup>4</sup>

§ 44 (a), (p. 83). MEANING OF "AS MANY AS."—"As many as." It is a way the apostle has of stating what is meant to include everybody. He is fond of qualified or limited phrases like the foregoing, or such as "he who," "if any man be," etc., where he is really stating a universal law. . . . He is apparently afraid of men's perverting the great boon of everlasting Life into a license to sin with impunity; and so he would alarm the conscience. . . . In the following example, in spite of his partial method of speaking, the meaning is very plain (Rom. 2: 11, 12; 3: 20): "For there is no respect of persons with GOD. For *as many as* have sinned without law (*i. e.*, all the Gentiles) shall also perish without law; and *as many as* have sinned in the law (*i. e.*, all the Jews) shall be judged (condemned to die) by the law. . . . Because by Works of law shall *no flesh* be justified (unto Life) in His sight" (*i. e.*, be so righteous before GOD as not to be condemned to perish).

Rom. 5: 12-21 is filled with partial expressions of universal

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<sup>1</sup> Literally, *mediated* (see margin of r. v.).

<sup>2</sup> Or, as it may also be translated, "who have escaped," *i. e.*, from Death. Indeed, I am inclined to this as the better rendering.

<sup>3</sup> Henceforth there in heaven, or nevermore upon earth, "to appear in the presence of God for us." Heb. 9: 12, 24-26; 10: 10-14. 2 Cor. 5: 16. John 16: 7, 28.

<sup>4</sup> Hope accordingly enters into the next life and into all future lives, until it culminates in fruition. As pertaining to "the God of hope" (Rom. 15: 13), it is safely lodged in Him within the veil, in the Holy of Holies where Christ has entered, and is eternal. And hence we are told that GOD hath subjected us to the vanity of the natural world in hope; because we are ultimately to be delivered from that bondage into the liberty of the sons of GOD in glory (Rom. 8: 16-25. See § 45). Wherefore the Bible directs us to increase and abound in hope; making the same a duty, and the contrary a sin. Let those who do not believe in eternal hope give thought to this.



meaning. We read: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and Death by sin; and so Death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (. . . . But not like as the offence, so also is the free Gift. For if through the offence of the one the many, [*i. e.*, all] died, much more the Grace of God, even the Gift by Grace, that of the One Man Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto the many, [*i. e.*, the same all]. And not like as through one that sinned is the Gift. For the judgment was from one to condemnation; but the free Gift is from many, all] offences unto justification. For if by the offence of the one Death reigned through the one; much more they, *i. e.*, all] that receive the abundance of Grace and of the Gift of righteousness shall reign in Life by the One, Jesus Christ.) Therefore," etc. (For vv. 18-21 see § 35.)

From the above and other like texts, and from what was said in § 44, we readily discern the universal intention, when the apostle says, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God." And yet such a sentence would bear in English also a partial construction if it had read, "For all who are," etc. So, if we substitute "all" for "they" in the immediately preceding sentence of the apostle.

§ 75 (a), (p. 144). MISTRANSLATION OF EKKLESIA.—I would give just here, 1 Tim. 3: 14, 15. I do this, because it is one of the most important of the many mistranslations connected with *ekkleisia*<sup>1</sup> which have been made in the interests of ecclesiasticism. The passage follows a number of minute directions to Timothy the young bishop of Ephesus respecting, among other things, the sort of persons whom he would ordain to be "overseers" or pastors of the several "*congregations*" of his diocese. Literally translated, it reads: "These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee quite shortly: but if I tarry, that thou mayest know how it is meet to conduct thyself in a<sup>2</sup> household of God, which is a congregation<sup>3</sup> of a living<sup>4</sup> God, a pillar and support of the truth." It will be

<sup>1</sup> See §§ 68, 74, 90 (a), 106.

<sup>2</sup> The only "the" in the entire sentence in the Greek is the one before "truth." The other (no less than four) insertions of "the" have been added to the word of God by the spirit of ecclesiasticism, and have a decidedly important part in changing the idea of the inspired writer; making that to apply to the whole *Church*, which was only intended of a single *congregation* thereof.

<sup>3</sup> *I. e.*, *ekkleisia*.

<sup>4</sup> God is here spoken of as "a living God," in contrast with the lifeless goddess Diana of the Ephesians, who, with her lifeless image, was specially worshipped in Timothy's diocese (Acts 19:23-41).

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seen that the passage does not declare, as do our versions, that "the Church" is "*the* pillar and ground of the truth"; but only that a congregation of God is "a pillar and support" or "stay of the truth."<sup>1</sup>

In fact, *ekklesia* in the N. T., as in other Greek writings, is applied to persons gathered together, or considered as a body, whatever the purpose. Thus in Acts 19:32, 39, 41, it is an "assembly" in a theatre of the worshippers of the goddess Diana; just as in 1 Tim. 3:15 it is a "congregation" of Timothy's diocese. It is also applied to the whole body of mankind under the power of Hades (Matt. 16:18), who were to be delivered therefrom, and built upon the Rock-Foundation of Jesus Christ; that is, to the entire body of the redeemed<sup>2</sup> (Acts 20:28. Eph. 1:22; 5:25. Col. 1:18. Heb. 2:8-15, etc.). And it has reference also to the organized Church (1 Cor. 10:32; 12:28; 15:9. Gal. 1:13. Phil. 3:6. Rom. 16:23),<sup>3</sup> but more often to all men, our versions being misleading. Still, even in them its most frequent application, in accordance with its normal meaning, is, very naturally, to separate

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<sup>1</sup> The word *hedraiōma*, here translated "support" or "stay," seems to be unique in this passage. It is, however, an evident derivative of *hedra*, which signifies a "support" in a sitting posture, a *sitting-place, seat, chair, stool, bench, throne, abode* or *place*. Hence:—a *seat* of religion, a *sanctuary, temple*, as we say, a *seat* of learning, or, as here, in the derivative, a "*seat* of the truth"; also, the *seat* of a disease, the *seat* of the body, the *back* of a horse (where the rider sits); a *bottom, foundation, base*, etc. And so we might render as in all likelihood St. Paul intended, "a pillar and base of the truth." The idea of firmness and stability is naturally to be found in the derivatives also; and accordingly, although thereby abandoning, perhaps, St. Paul's consistent metaphor, I have been content to translate "support," or "stay" (the marginal rendering of the a. v. and r. v.), or by the literal "seat." But I prefer the consistent metaphor, "a pillar and base."

<sup>2</sup> For He hath gathered together all things into one body, even all whom He hath redeemed; and He is made the head over all or over that congregation of all things which is His body, and which in its entirety, and no less, is the fulness of Him that *filleth all* in all. And of this all-including household of God He is the chief Corner Stone on which all are built. Eph. 1:4-10, 22, 23; 2:1, 20, 21; 3:9, 11, 12, 15; 4:6-16.

<sup>3</sup> These I believe to be all the examples referring strictly to the organized Church as a whole, after its enlargement into two or more congregations; but a single congregation is often mentioned.

congregations in the various localities whither the gospel had extended. Of this use of *ekklesia* the examples are far more than of all others put together.

§ 90 (a), (p. 178). THE FOUNDATION ROCK AND CORNER STONE.—  
 1. After the great bishop of Hippo became more thoroughly versed in Greek we read of him as follows: "St. Augustine in his earlier writings taught that St. Peter is the rock, but he afterwards gave up that view, and held that Christ is the rock. His words are,—'I said in a certain place of the apostle St. Peter, that upon him as upon the rock the Church was founded. . . . But I know that afterwards I most often expounded that saying of our LORD—'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church'—as meaning upon Him whom St. Peter confessed, saying,—'Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God.' Let the reader choose which of these two interpretations is the more probable' (*Retract. lib. i. c. 21*)." This may seem a threadbare subject to scholars; but what a pity it is that scholars do not more frequently instruct the people in these same threadbare subjects. There is no danger of its being done too often, even though nothing new be said. Shall the opponents of truth alone be tireless in putting forth their views? Or is the word of the unsearchable God ever exhausted? In truth, we have that word itself as our exemplar in telling over and over of the true foundation or chief corner stone of the congregation of the LORD. Even St. Augustine did not seem to realise the great importance of a right conception of this now famous passage, if we may judge by his apparently indifferent "Let the reader choose." The fact is, he lived before the bishop of Rome became the head of the Western Church, and died while the Bible was still considered the supreme arbiter of truth. Not anticipating the subsequent abuse of the passage, he was only acknowledging that it pertained to each reader to judge for himself. It was after his death that Vincent of Lerins wrote his celebrated and generally accepted treatise,<sup>2</sup> declaring the holy scriptures the primary authority for all alike, and directing his readers, where the Bible is not clear, to various kinds of testimony but admitting no testimony in opposition to the scriptures.

2. But however important to all the power of choice, it is also important to the individual to choose aright. In the matter now before us, in view of the word "rock" in the Bible being invariably

<sup>1</sup> Rev. Vernon Stoly, *The Catholic Religion*, Note, p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Augustine was born A.D. 354, and died A.D. 430. Vincent wrote his treatise in 434.

a symbol of God, and never merely of man,<sup>1</sup> and of the many examples thereof, and of the Greek word *ekklesia* in our passage having always meant any *gathering together*,—that is, an assembly, congregation, or meeting of any sort, in a definite place,—and never what we now call “the church,” whether Jewish or Christian, and again, that its reference here is to the great congregation continually descending and gathered together in Hades, and to its deliverance therefrom by the Son of the living God; who, being the only Source of Immortal Life, had come to confer the Gift thereof upon each one of that congregation, so that, in consequence of the Gift, the

<sup>1</sup> Is. 51:1, 2, may seem to be an exception to this universal statement. But even if we should admit it to be an apparent exception, it would be one that really and effectually proves the rule; for not only would its singularity imply the rule, but on closer examination its apparently exceptional character will disappear, and it will be found to be a regular example of the rule. The passage reads: “Look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged. Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you.” Let me add a brief portion of what follows: “My righteousness is near; my salvation is gone forth, and mine arms shall judge the people. . . . Lift up your eyes to the heavens and look upon the earth beneath; for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner; but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished. . . . Therefore the redeemed of the LORD shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads. . . . The captive exile hasteneth that he may be loosed, and that he should not die in the pit, perish in (Hades), nor that his bread (of Life) should fail.” These and other portions of the context show the passage to tell literally of a redemption on earth by the LORD, and also of a spiritual redemption by Him for ever; while the rock-like faith of Abraham is invoked as a type of the Rock foundation for these promised redemptions. But more: For the scriptures tell us that through faith Abraham begat life out of “the deadness of Sarah’s womb (Rom. 4:19); and also that through faith he redeemed Isaac from Death; thus, intimating a dual victory over Death, or one over Hades, and the other over the Grave. And because of this faith and its results, the scriptures make Abraham the type of Him who through Faith saved the world from also a twofold Death, or one of soul and body, obtaining for all men the resurrection of the body from the grave, and of the soul from the dead womb of Hades. It is to this dual victory that reference is often made, for example,

Gates of Hades should not prevail against its members; as is the evident idea of the Foundation upon the live rock; in view, I repeat, of all this, there would seem to be no reasonable privilege of choice between the earlier and the later interpretation of Augustine. For not Peter, whose very name symbolised Death, but Christ the Life Giver alone was able by His divine power to be the Redeemer from Hades, and the Giver of Immortality; and He therefore alone is the Rock (*Petra*) on which the congregation of His redeemed,—“my congregation” He calls it,—even the congregation purchased with His blood, is built. As for Peter, he was only what Jesus expressly called him, by way of contrast to the symbol of Himself,—to wit, an ordinary stone (*petros*); this figure, before the resurrection, being appropriated in the sacred writings to those under the power of Death. By it, accordingly, Jesus represents Peter to be just like his fellow men,—in fact, their representative, needing with them to be redeemed and made immortal, or to be built upon Him, the Rock, safe from the prevailing power of Hades, even upon Him who thereafter brought Life and Immortality to light. The word *petros*, which is used in Greek for a stone of moderate size, is therefore never employed of Christ, even when He is said to be the chief Corner-Stone;<sup>1</sup> another word for stone (*lithos*) being required to express the idea. On the other hand, *petra* is the massive, bed-rock of the earth, or the great foundation on which all things on the earth, including all life, are upheld; and, as said above, the word is never used in the Bible, in a symbolic sense, of other than God; even as to Him only it is appropriate. Keeping then these

when it is said: “But when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O Hades, where is thy victory?” (1 Cor. 15: 53-55). In a typical sense, therefore, Abraham is called in the scriptures, as representing Christ, “the heir of the world,” and “the father of us all” (Rom. 4: 13, 16); and in the same sense the symbol “rock” is applicable to him, even because it is the symbol of Christ. And so, the passage in Isaiah is no exception to the statement, that in the Bible the word “rock,” when symbolically used, always has reference to the living, unchangeable God. Is. 51: 1, 2, is the only instance where the relation to God is not also direct and immediate in its expression. And in this instance we look unto Abraham as the type of the Divine Rock whence we are hewn, and to “the deadness of Sarah’s womb” as the type of Hades, the abode of the dead, which is the hole of the pit whence we are digged.

<sup>1</sup> I. e., of those recovered from Death.



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things in mind, and that the words of Jesus relate to what Peter had said to Him, that He was the Christ the Son of the living God, those words should be translated in a strictly literal manner; on the one hand, so as to be free from the view of "the many," which can only be made to appear correct by representing Jesus, most irreverently, as at one and the same time calling His disciple both a small stone and a great rock; and on the other, so as to bring out the obvious contrast between *petros* and *petra* made by the Divine Speaker in immediate connection. The strictly literal rendering, which also is in exact harmony with the divine, long-expected and long-foretold mission of the Messiah, the Son of the living God, and into which the introduction of Peter as the foundation-rock strikes such a discordant note, would be, "Thou<sup>1</sup> art a stone, and<sup>2</sup> upon this Rock I will build my congregation"; to wit, the great gathering of all mankind shortly thereafter to be purchased with His Blood, and redeemed by Him out of Hades. And so He adds, "and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." Surely it was of no divine power in St. Peter that St. Paul makes mention, when he too tells of our escape from the darkness of Hades. For he writes: "Giving thanks unto the Father . . . who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love: in whom we have our<sup>3</sup> redemption, the forgiveness of our<sup>4</sup> sins: who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature. . . . And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. And He is the Head of the body of the (said) congregation: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all (things)<sup>5</sup> he might have the pre-eminence." Col. 1: 12-15, 17, 18.

3. The ordinary rendering of Matt. 16: 18 does not bring out the idea thus forcibly expressed in the Greek. That idea is lost in

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<sup>1</sup> "Thou" is expressed in the Greek, and is emphatic.

<sup>2</sup> The usual sense of course of *kai*. The Lexicon of L. and S., however, besides giving in certain cases such additional meanings as *but*, and *now*, etc., says: "III. after words implying sameness or likeness, *kai* must be rendered by *as* . . . so also after words implying comparison. This would require us to translate, "Thou art a stone *even as* upon this Rock," etc.; so bringing out the comparison. But still better, "Thou art a stone (*i. e.*, stone-dead), *so* (or, *and now*) upon this Rock (*i. e.*, "the Son of the living God") I will build my congregation; and the Gates of Hades shall not prevail against it"; that is, to keep any one stone-dead.

<sup>3</sup> And <sup>4</sup> Lit. "the"; which the r. v. also renders "our."

<sup>5</sup> Or, "among all."—Note that it is "the congregation of the dead" of which the apostle speaks, or not the church of the living.



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the barren affirmation, "Thou art Peter." The reader would naturally ask, What, pray, has the name "Peter" to do with the matter?<sup>1</sup> What, that is to say, indeed, with the proper symbol of the Godhead, and with things (the foundation of Life and the deliverance from Hades) which require divine power? We perceive plainly, however, what is meant, when we put emphasis on the "Thou," as the Greek requires, and the sentence is rendered so as to show the strong contrast which Jesus was making between *petros*, an ordinary stone, and *petra*, the live, bed rock, which is the foundation that supports all life. As terms, similar in form, but of marked contrast in signification, they are evidently put in decided opposition to each other. And as they denote, practically the same substance, and the only difference is in the relative insignificance of the stone, and the indispensable importance of the rock, the attention is at once called to so great a difference, and to the emphatic character of the contrast. Thus are we led on to inquire also into the respective symbolic meanings of the two words, and to what is intended by their use in contrast. We ask, in fine, if, in saying so significantly to Peter, "*Thou art a stone*,"—a humiliating declaration at once calculated to excite attention, particularly right after Peter's noble confession,—and then immediately going on in comparison to speak of "*this Rock*,"—a word of such lofty symbolical meaning,—as the Foundation on which He Himself (so says the passage) was to build His congregation, and in all safety from the power of Hades, Jesus was not making a corresponding distinction between Himself and Peter? For if none was intended, and Peter was not only the stone, but also, in spite of unvarying scriptural symbolism to the contrary, the rock of the passage, why then, after calling him a stone, does Jesus say "*this rock*"? Would He not have said "*that rock*"? Or "*thee as a rock*"? But why at all should He be assumed to have described one and the same person by two words of such opposite signification, where but one could be appropriate; and have done this, too, in the very same sentence, and in immediate connection, as though the one was the synonym of the other? Surely, if indeed He were speaking in both clauses of the sentence of but one person, Peter, then, of the two symbolic words but one could have been consistently employed. He would have said either, "*Thou art a stone, and upon that stone*" etc., or, "*Thou art a rock, and upon that rock*," etc. And if, on the other hand, according to a conjecture which has been made, Jesus (not using *petros*) had said, "*Thou art cephas*," using the language of the country, as He in fact is said to have styled Peter on an earlier occasion, the same contrast would be there, only not so forcibly expressed

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<sup>1</sup> See Acts 4: 12.

as by the kindred words *petros* and *petra*. In truth, if *cephas* had been the actual word spoken, it would lend a peculiar emphasis to the contrast, as we have it, of *petros* and *petra*; for it would at once start up the question, why in that event, in the inspired text, *petros* should have been so industriously substituted for the word actually spoken? Must we not have concluded, that it was to make the contrast the more apparent? So, conjecture what we will in the matter, we may not deny that the Divine Wisdom has seen fit to give us for our permanent instruction, and also for that of His followers who had personal knowledge of the change, the contrast of *petros* and *petra*; and if in this there has been an industrious substitution of *petros* for *cephas*, who does not see how the intention of the Spirit would only be made thereby the more pointedly obvious?

In further confirmation of this intention, the word of inspiration has taken care expressly to tell us, that therein *cephas* and *petros* have precisely the same signification; and it says this also when speaking of the name given to the apostle. For when the latter was first brought by his brother to Jesus, and the name was given, it was *Cephas*, and it was expressly translated *petros*. We read: "When Jesus beheld him, He said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called *Cephas*, which is by interpretation, *petros*"—*i. e.*, "a stone." This passage therefore, as well as the one under discussion, shows the desire of the Master, whether He used *cephas* or *petros*,<sup>2</sup> to call attention, by the name which He gave to Peter, to the powerlessness of a man, however prominent He has made him, to gain Life for himself; and that eternal Life must be built upon an eternal, rock-like Foundation; or one which only God can supply.

4. To use St. Paul's words: "Nevertheless the firm Foundation of GOD standeth."<sup>3</sup> "For other foundation can no man lay than

<sup>1</sup> John 1:42. If accordingly there should be imagined at this late day a difference of signification between *cephas* and *petros*, whether as spoken by the country people of Galilee, or by reason of derivation, or otherwise, we have, first, scriptural assurance that in the scriptures there is no difference. And, secondly, if there had been, it would but have lent additional potency to the intention of the inspired word in its abolition, and the substitution of *petros*.

<sup>2</sup> The Greek of Matt. 16:18 is what the overruling Providence has caused to be brought down to us for our guidance. That Jesus used *cephas* on that occasion is therefore a mere conjecture in opposition to the inspired word as we have it. When He did use *cephas* in the Greek of St. John, it was interpreted right away, we see, by *petros*.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Tim. 2:19. A word or two of comment. The Work of Christ

that which is laid which is Jesus Christ." <sup>1</sup> And Isaiah says: "Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with Death,

gives us a resurrection both of Life and of Judgment. And He declares this of all in the graves (John 5: 29). But why the unusual plural—"graves"? Why not "of all in the grave," as is the ordinary form of expression? Herein He speaks as do the scriptures, which tell us of "the Gates of Death" or "of the Grave" (Job 38: 17. Ps. 9: 13; 107: 18. Is. 38: 10), and that Death and Hades swallow up respectively the body and the soul (1 Cor. 15: 53-55 and chap.), and that Death on the pale horse has Hades following with him (Rev. 6: 8). Hence Hosea, foretelling of Christ's Work of Deliverance, wrote, "I will ransom them from the power of Sheol (Hades); I will redeem them from Death: O Death, I will be thy plagues; O Sheol, I will be thy destruction: repentance (change of purpose) shall be hid from mine eyes" (13: 14). But in addition to the resurrection into Life and Judgment, which our Saviour, when He spoke, was then about to effect (John 5: 25), there is a third resurrection, also mentioned by Him, which, He declares, requires the faith of man; and too, a perfect faith, having no need of the Judgment according to deeds. His words are: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my words, and believeth in Him that sent me, hath eternal Life, and cometh not into Judgment, but hath passed out of Death into Life." John 5: 24.

Returning now to 2 Tim. 2: 19, the error of Hymenæus and Phil-  
 etus condemned by St. Paul in the context consisted in affirming  
 this third resurrection to have been already completed, as though  
 this also required only the Work of Christ;—a doctrine evidently  
 standing in the way of "the work of faith" (2 Th. 1: 11; 1 Th. 1: 3);  
 —that is, of good works by the individual as a necessity (1 Tim.  
 6: 18, 19); so that, as the apostle said, it overthrew the faith of  
 some, thereby tending more and more unto ungodliness (2 Tim.  
 2: 16). But while condemning the heresy, he would have men never-  
 theless gratefully to keep in memory their restoration from Death  
 into Life, and to realise also with fear and trembling their resur-  
 rection into the Judgment according to deeds. And so, of these  
 two resurrections He says: "Nevertheless the firm foundation of  
 GOD standeth, having this seal, The LORD knoweth them that  
 are His (*i. e.*, those whom He hath purchased for His own from the  
 destruction of Death and Hades; which is the resurrection into  
 Life): And (also this seal), Let every one that nameth the name of  
 the LORD (or that is His) depart from iniquity." That in this  
 second seal the apostle warns us of the Judgment according to deeds  
 he immediately goes on to show; and he further says, that only by

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. 3: 11.

and with Sheol (Hades) are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves: therefore thus saith the LORD GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a Foundation a Stone, a tried Stone, a precious Corner (Stone), of sure Foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.<sup>1</sup> Judgment also will I lay to the line, and Righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place. And your covenant with Death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with Sheol shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it. As often as it passeth through, it shall take you; for morning by morning shall it pass through, by day and by night: and it shall be nought but terror to understand the message. . . . Now therefore be ye not scoffers, lest your bonds be made strong: for a consummation, and that determined, have I heard from the LORD GOD of hosts, upon the whole earth."<sup>2</sup> In this passage, the Foundation of Life is affirmed to be of the LORD's laying, and to be a sure deliverance from Death and Hades; and striking emphasis is put upon its representation as a Stone;<sup>3</sup> while that of man's laying is declared to be a refuge of lies, which can only eventuate in destruction. And this is one of several similar passages which are applied by our LORD to Himself, and in regard to which He announces that He is the chief Corner-Stone which the builders refuse.<sup>4</sup> And after Him Peter's own words to the rulers and elders were: "This is the Stone which was set at nought of you the builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven,

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becoming perfect shall we attain unto the final resurrection (see vv. 20, 21). So far therefore from this being past, it will ever overtake sinfulness, notwithstanding the Work of Christ, or a man's imperfect repentance and faith, or his baptism, or participation in the Memorial Supper, or any so-called priestly absolution, or aught else.

<sup>1</sup> For the Foundation is laid in Christ; and what can man's faith do therein? Why then haste? Rather, on the one Foundation let us haste to build (2 Pet. 3:12). Thus only shall we not be confounded—*i.e.*, "put to shame." See Rom. 9:33; 10:11. 2 Pet. 2:6. (Shows how St. Peter regarded the matter.)

<sup>2</sup> Is. 28:15-19, 22. The variations from the a. v. are those of the r. v.

<sup>3</sup> The Stone in all likelihood symbolizes the human, as the Rock does the divine nature of the Christ.

<sup>4</sup> Matt. 21:42-45. Mk. 12:9-12. Luke 20:15-19.

that is given among men, whereby we must be saved." <sup>1</sup> And yet, how many there are, who in effect build upon the name Peter, as the veritable foundation of the Church, for their hope of salvation! Are then, let us ask ourselves, the words of the apostle to be limited to his contemporaries of the Jewish Church? What about those who "glory in men," "whether (in) Paul, or Apollos, or *cephas*"? <sup>2</sup> And here let us note the alarming fact, how passages of scripture, which tell of the only Foundation of Life, tell also so often of a complete Judgment accompanying that Life. Just as the passage of Isaiah tells of a Judgment by line and plummet, or strictly according to deeds; not one therefore deferred at all, but now going on; even as should be the character of the Judgment of Him whose symbol is the immovable Rock. Do we then realise what these prophetic warnings signify to ourselves? Who would contend that in the above passage Isaiah was speaking of Peter as the Foundation of precious Stone on which we are to be built, safe from the power of Death and Hades? Or that Peter was the Rock of which in another passage he says: "And a man shall be as a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as streams of water in a dry place, [as the shade of a great Rock in a weary land]"? <sup>3</sup> And who thinks of Peter when he reads: "And the LORD said, Behold there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon the Rock: and it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the Rock, and will cover thee with my hand until I have passed by"? <sup>4</sup> And yet, to one who is grounded in the teaching that our "Life is hid with Christ in God," <sup>5</sup> it is no more preposterous to make these assumptions, than to assert that in the passage in Matthew Peter is the Rock-Foundation on which the dead of all ages, and also the living, are to be made secure for ever from the power of Hades.

5. If therefore, in view of the admitted application to Christ in all these kindred texts of the terms *Foundation*, *Rock*, and *Corner-Stone*, it be asked, Why dwell upon such well-known and accepted truths? the obvious answer is, first, that we may follow the scriptural rule of interpretation, and compare scripture with scripture; and, next, that we may emphasise the inconsistency, and the danger to Christian truth, of interpreting a single passage out of harmony with all the others. Moreover, if we recognise so readily that all the other texts speak in unison of Christ, can we not discern the enslaving hold upon us of a narrow and dangerous ecclesiasticism, when, to serve a partisan, selfish or ambitious purpose, it causes us

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<sup>1</sup> Acts 4: 11, 12.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. 2: 21, 22, and the chap.

<sup>3</sup> Is. 32: 2.

<sup>4</sup> Ex. 33: 21, 22.

<sup>5</sup> Col. 3: 3.



to twist a single, kindred text into discord with the rest, and in place of the all-loving promise of Immortality to the whole human race by the Saviour of the world,—of which in its forlorn state Peter is made the representative,—to prefer the exclusive exaltation of a limited number, and that, upon a mortal foundation,—in short, one of Works?<sup>1</sup>

Consider, too, how we thus introduce into the divine mission of Jesus to save all men, indiscriminately, from Death the rankest respect of persons, and make of a stone,—so declared by Jesus Himself,—even of that which by nature is dead, and in the Scriptures is the symbol of Death, our hope of Life; or of immunity from Hades and from the stone's inherent condition! Thank God! it is not upon a crumbling stone—how can one so believe?—that the sinner's future depends. His firm Foundation is, and must be, the Living Rock; and in its Cleft he must be hidden, like Moses, while that dazzling glory passes by, on which no man can look and live. More explicitly, in the presence of the uncompromising justice, and the unsullied purity and holiness of the LORD of glory the sinner has no place. He may not be face to face with Him whose ways are past finding out, nor fathom the deep heavenly mysteries of the Gospel of Christ. He can only see with the eye of faith the back parts of that glory, or what has been accomplished by the supernatural mystery of the divine humanity, and he can listen gratefully to the good tidings of the glorious results. "The secret things" are not his to discern;—only "those which are revealed." It is however enough, and of all things satisfactory to know, that that which is revealed gives him for the Foundation of his Immortal Life the Divine Rock, and not a "stone," the image of Death. And it is not merely once, nor twice, that the fundamental revelation is given. It is the consistent burden of the word of God; and the declaration to Peter is a reiteration thereof,—an announcement by "the Christ, the Son of the living God," of His mission to recover the world from Death and Hades. And He is determined that what He had said shall be made plain. For in the same connection, in language divested of parable,

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<sup>1</sup> Indeed, apart from the work of Peter in recognising the Messiah, it is upon one work only, and that too, partly, or altogether the work of fellow mortals,—to wit, our baptism,—or upon a single act of external formality, however dutiful and useful for its own purposes the work may be. But if by baptism we have Peter for a foundation, and through him are made secure from the prevailing power of Hades; thus because of such baptism rising into Life, how is it that we were not commanded to be baptised in the name of Peter?



we read: "From that time began Jesus to show unto His disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up."

6. Many imagine the words of Jesus under discussion to be a promise of a special reward to Peter in consequence of his recognition of the exalted personality of our LORD. But, in addition to the many other reasons to the contrary of this, some of which have been given, all but one of the twelve were alike following Him because of a common belief with Peter; and that one too, perhaps, although also from the basest motives. For John the Baptist had plainly announced what Peter on this occasion avowed, before any one of them had been called to discipleship.<sup>1</sup> As the oldest member of the little band, the latter merely took upon himself, as was his wont, to be their spokesman. But his brother Andrew, on bringing him to Jesus, had told him that Jesus was the Christ; that is, the Messiah.<sup>2</sup> And Nathaniel had said unto Jesus, "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel."<sup>3</sup> And these representations of His true character had been made at the first, or long before He had given so many wonderful proof-signs thereof. As between such earlier acknowledgments and this of Peter, who had but recently witnessed a most startling exhibition of the divine power in Jesus, which he could not gainsay, his acknowledgment certainly seems to be the less meritorious, and the less deserving of special reward. Under far more trying circumstances, too, a few days before, just after many disciples had deserted Jesus, Peter himself—this time avowedly for all the chosen band—had comforted the human heart of the GOD-Man by the words, "LORD, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of Eternal Life. And we have believed and are sure that Thou art the Holy One of GOD."<sup>4</sup> The Forerunner, moreover, had publicly designated Jesus as "the Lamb of GOD which taketh away the sin of the world."<sup>5</sup> Although this intimation that He was to be the true sacrificial Lamb to whom all the temple sacrifices pointed was not realised by the disciples in all its suggestive significance,—indeed, not until after Peter had made his later avowal of the common faith, did he or the others learn that Jesus was to sacrifice His life,—yet they all alike looked upon Him as the expected Messiah, and the Son of the living God, who could, and would,

<sup>1</sup> John 1:19-30; 3:26-36. Matt. 3 ch. Mk. 1:2-11. Luke 3:15-18.

<sup>2</sup> John 1:40-42.

<sup>3</sup> John 1:49.

<sup>4</sup> John 6:68, 69. The reading, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (a. v.) in this other passage, is of inferior authority, but not without support.

<sup>5</sup> John 1:29, 36.

preserve them by His mighty power from all enemies. And in their eyes He was to become the greatest of the kings on the earth; and in the same earthly sense was to subject the world to His sway, and would make of their nation an earthly kingdom of heaven that should be over all; while themselves, His chosen twelve, were to become His glorious earthly princes.<sup>1</sup> The furthest thought from their minds in respect of Him or them was a life of danger, suffering and death. Indeed, Peter's avowal was made shortly after the stupendous miracle of feeding the multitude, in which feeding they had had every opportunity of scrutiny, and were still exulting, as shown by that ready and zealous avowal, in such a remarkable exhibition of the supernatural power of their Divine Master. Under all the circumstances, the avowal had no special merit, and, on this particular occasion at least, would seem to have called for no special reward. The special merit was rather that of those who had preceded Peter in making similar avowals; and Peter himself was far more deserving, when, after the many had abandoned Jesus, he had in like manner spoken out without hesitation for the twelve. And because also he was speaking for the twelve in our present passage it would show that if any reward of becoming a foundation of the church had been really promised to him, it would have been intended for them all. In this case, therefore, the words of St. Paul, though referring in fact to the primary labours of the first preachers of the gospel, would have had additional significance, seeing that, from this point of view likewise, the early converts would have been made, pursuant to the alleged promise, "of the household of God, being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus being its chief Corner Stone." (Eph. 2: 19, 20.) Under any interpretation it is well to take note, that these words put both apostles and prophets or teachers, all of them alike, on the same plane as foundations of the household of God. And so of the apostles, when it is said by St. John, "And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb." (Rev. 21: 14.)

7. But in respect of the avowal of Peter, Jesus on the present occasion designedly brought out the avowal afresh; Himself introducing the subject of the miracle, and calling special attention to its more conspicuous details, and shortly after following it up with direct questions as to His own personality; first asking whom men thought Him to be; and next, putting the question that led straight to His purpose,—“But who say ye that I am?” And the answer of Peter, evidently made for all so addressd, was just what He

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<sup>1</sup> Just as afterward the bishop of Rome set himself up to be.

wished and had expected; and it opened the way to a safer disclosure in plain words of that which all along He had been intimating in parables, and now at last, before His career upon earth was closed, would have at all hazards His twelve immediate disciples clearly know;—namely, that He, the Lamb of God, was then on His final journey to Jerusalem, there to be offered up for the sins of the world. His time was now close at hand, only a few days remaining before His crucifixion. It was all-important therefore for the twelve to be disabused at last of their earthly notions, and to learn instead the spiritual nature of His divine mission; and that to give Life to the world, which was the great purpose of that mission, required Him to be killed on the cross of malefactors as the Substitute for all evil-doers. Divining, as He did of course, the terrible revulsion of feeling that would ensue in the breasts of the twelve, by reason of their learning what a gloomy future was immediately threatening them, and because of the abrupt change of their thoughts from earthly to heavenly things, He sought, if possible, to strengthen them to receive His unexpected disclosure, and to preserve their allegiance in the face thereof. As became a faithful Shepherd, He was caring for His flock. In the first place, as mentioned, He had made them personal witnesses of His stupendous miracle shortly before, and thereby manifested His unquestionable possession of divine power;—a miracle so astounding, that He had had to escape from the multitude whom He had fed, who would have risen up with full confidence of success to make Him their earthly Messianic King. It was no wonder, in view of the effect of the miracle upon the people at large, that His immediate followers, who had witnessed His many other miracles, and long before had expressed their faith in His Messiahship and Divine Nature, when shortly thereafter asked by Himself whom they considered Him to be, should again, through their usual spokesman, have acknowledged their faith. It was no new revelation to them, as we have seen. It had been revealed to them by the Father from heaven at the baptism of Jesus, when there came the voice, saying, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”<sup>1</sup> It was simply a timely confession of the common faith brought out anew by the Master for his own definite purpose. He emphasises however its expression by Peter on the present occasion, calling attention thereto in connection with the line of thought which He was pursuing, and the terrible disclosure of His approaching death which He was about to make. As Peter was the spokesman, He addresses him personally, but through him us all; for so the announcement of the common Rock-Foundation of

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. 3: 17.

Immortality for His congregation, and also of a judgment upon every man according to his deeds, or without respect of persons, of which judgment He likewise takes care to give warning, demanded. Inasmuch as those present had the same belief with Peter, and it required but one to give it expression, and no one of them dissented, it follows that what was said was intended for them also, and for all of like faith. In truth, every one of the great congregation who was to be brought from under the prevailing power of Hades may consider himself addressed when we read, "And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou Simon, Bar-Jonah:<sup>1</sup> for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in Heaven. And I say also unto thee, that thou art a stone; so<sup>2</sup> upon this Rock will I build my congregation; and the Gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And (besides this Gift of Immortality) I will give unto thee (*thee* representing all) the keys of the kingdom of heaven; (that is, I promise thee entrance therein; but it is when free from the bondage of sinfulness; for He continues) and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."<sup>3</sup>

8. As said above, in styling Peter a stone, He intimates that Peter, and of course we, whose mortal condition Peter represents, are in the jaws of Death. Indeed, the universal application of the address is here made obvious; for it is not Peter alone, but all the congregation purchased by the Redeemer of mankind, who are promised immunity from the prevailing power of the Gates of

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<sup>1</sup> In modern parlance "Simon, son of Jonah," would be "Simon Johnson." In the next verse the name is implied, thus: "And I say also unto thee, (Simon Bar-Jonah), That thou art a stone; so upon this Rock" etc. It is natural to say allegorically, "Simon, thou art a stone"; but not to say, "Simon, thou art Peter." To address one in that way seems meaningless and undignified. The thought at once arises, "Well, suppose he is Peter, what has that to do with the matter?" Just think for a moment of our Divine Master saying: "Simon Johnson, thou art Peter; and upon this rock—*i. e.*, that thou art Peter—I will build my church; and the Gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." Oh, the horror of it!

<sup>2</sup> See ¶ 2, footnote.

<sup>3</sup> That is to say, whatever a man does, so is his judgment;—*i. e.*, according to the deed, and without respect of persons, and both as to him who binds or looses and him who is bound or loosed. See Matt. 18: 18, said directly to us all; as this passage is indirectly said to us all through Peter; and John 20: 23, through all the apostles.

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Hades. So again, when presently afterwards "He charged His disciples that they should tell no man that He was the Christ," He plainly recognised that Peter's profession had been made in behalf of them all, and that His answer to him was also to them. But the universal application of His words, along with this primary application of them to the twelve, is further shown, when He takes care to couple with the irrespective Gift of Immortality to all His congregation redeemed out of Hades the Promise of the Keys to heaven, and the strict, irrespective, immediate Judgment upon every member thereof according as he binds or looses,—that is, according to his deeds. In His address to Peter, in order to prepare the way for the disclosure of His own coming death, and the irrevocable judgment upon them that was to accompany the Gift of Immortality, in place of their proud earthly hopes, of necessity He used the language of parable. If the minds of men at this late day were not confounded by traditionary lore, they would readily discern that the promise of the keys of the kingdom of heaven had for its object no special reward, which was to be bestowed upon Peter only, or upon the twelve, but was a promise which from the beginning had been given to all men<sup>1</sup> and was called forth specially on the occasion now under consideration, to draw off the attention of all the twelve, who at this critical juncture were listening intently to His words, from the hope of an earthly kingdom to a better hope; one which they could rely upon as sure when promised by Him; the hope, namely, of the kingdom of heaven. But that the promise had also all men in view is evidenced not only by the representative character of Peter throughout the address, but by the fact that Peter had just been made the recipient of the promise of Immortality to all the congregation of the redeemed. That is to say, the two promises are in immediate connection; Jesus first telling Peter that His congregation should be built upon the Rock of His Divinity, and that over it the Gates of Hades should not prevail; and thereupon immediately adding to this promise of eternal Life the additional promise of the keys of the kingdom of heaven. The universality of both promises, thus in due order connected, is still further evidenced by the number of times and the variety of ways that they occur elsewhere in the scriptures, where the application of them is to all mankind. At the close of the inspired book, in the place of the promise of the keys the climax seems to be reached in the assurance, that, save to those who are still tainted by sinfulness, the Gates of heaven are wide open toward the four quarters of the earth, and are no more to be

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<sup>1</sup> Tit. 1 : 2.



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shut.<sup>1</sup> If we would couple this joyful assurance with the declaration of Jesus, that to Him, or not to Peter, belong the keys of Hades and of Death, and also the key of David, which is to say, of the Christ; and that what He openeth no man, Peter nor any other,

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<sup>1</sup> Rev. 21: 25-27. Augustine says: "For no one man, but the oneness of the Church has received the keys. From this therefore the excellence of Peter is proclaimed; forasmuch as he was made a figure of the entirety and oneness of the Church itself, when it was said to him, 'I give to thee,' what was given to all. For that ye may know that the Church has received the keys of the kingdom of heaven, hear ye in another place what the LORD says to all His apostles"—quoting John 20: 23, where the power to bind and loose, here given to Peter in figure, is also given to all the disciples. And note, the word used is not apostles, but disciples. Whether others besides apostles were present, we are not told. At all events, the formal gift was to only ten of the apostles, Thomas not being present. This fact shows again that it was a figure; and Matt. 18: 6-35 makes the application to all men to be conclusive.—In the above extract Augustine uses the same word in Latin for "church," that our LORD uses in the Greek for the "congregation" to be redeemed from Hades: but from frequent misapplication the word had acquired an ecclesiastical sense altogether different from what it had had in our LORD's time. (I speak only of the Greek; for nobody knows what was in the lost Aramaic text.) Although Augustine admits the representative character, he fails to realise how natural is the language to the representative one who alone had been the speaker; who, having been told that he was a dead stone, forthwith receives the promise of restoration to Life and of the keys whereby he was to gain heaven itself. The same "figure," which makes him represent the death of all, is thus preserved in making him represent the Life and final blessedness of all. But in this what becomes of the implication of excellence in Peter? His actual condition, he is told, is that of Death; and what follows is of something promised; and both in the actual condition and in the promises he is put as the figure of us all, and in equal degree. In another place Augustine imagines, contrary to what he concludes, that Peter because of the primacy of his apostleship carried in figure, in general, the personality of the Church, and even makes the gift of the keys to be that of the whole Church. And yet with no logical sequence, but with truth intermixed, he afterwards continues: "Peter had said, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.' Therefore, said He, 'Upon this Rock, which thou hast confessed, I will build my church.' For the Rock was Christ, upon



shutteth,<sup>1</sup> whether it be the Gates of heaven or hell; we should recognise more clearly the all-comprehending significance of the promises addressed to Peter.

9. And here it may be as well to note, that it is not the keys themselves which are given in the address. In the logical order of things they are only promised; and the promise is made to assure all men, but at that time the twelve disciples especially, unto whom He was on the point of disclosing that He was to suffer and die, that, as St. Peter himself tells us, we should be "begotten again unto a living hope (or a hope that knows no death), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, kept in heaven for you (the strangers to whom the apostle was writing) that are preserved by the power of God through Faith (*i. e.*, of Christ) for salvation ready to be revealed in latest time: wherein," St. Peter goes on to say, "ye greatly rejoice," adding, with what would seem to be a recollection of Jesus' disclosure, "though now for a brief season, if need be, grieved by manifold temptations."<sup>2</sup> And yet, although in the logical order the keys are only promised, because the actual gift of them properly followed the crucifixion, still, in anticipation of that great event, and because the Lamb (it may be also by anticipation) is represented as slain from the foundation of the world,<sup>3</sup> therefore, from the very first the keys would seem to have been put in the possession of men; and most consistently, seeing that they were created in the likeness of God. Accordingly, in the varied allegories and declarations of the Bible it is ever the good deeds, whether active or passive, of the man himself, which promote his progress heavenward; and it is in these that he verily wields the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And so it is, when at length he attains perfection, that he finds the gates of the kingdom

which Foundation Peter himself also was built. The Church therefore which is founded upon Christ has received from Him the keys of the kingdom of heaven,—in Peter, *i. e.*, the power of binding and loosing sins." The latter ambiguous clause is added in an effort to make his logic good. *In Evang. Joannis tract.* 124, § 5. Compare his "For no one man, but the oneness of the Church has received the keys." Hence we should construe the old writer consistently to say: The gift was to Peter in figure, but to the Church in fact. And this he does in effect say in his first clause just above. I was not cognizant of these excerpts when I wrote the text, but was pleased to be confirmed in part by so great a theologian, and so early a writer. See the original Latin in Gieseler, I. § 94, where I chanced upon the excerpts.

<sup>1</sup>Rev. 1:18; 3:7.

<sup>2</sup>1 Pet. 1:3-5.

<sup>3</sup>Rev. 13:8.

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wide open for his reception, come from what quarter he may; even as they had been thus open, waiting for him, during all the æons of his imperfect condition. So again, of course, it is the evil deeds of a man which delay his passage through the open gates of Hades; thus preventing him from more speedily reaching the open gates of Heaven.<sup>1</sup> For, from the beginning, in anticipation of the triumphant mission of the God-Man, the gates of the two places have been open to men, with supreme reliance upon the unchangeable plan to save them all; even as was required by that Mercy which endureth for ever. Of this anticipated opening the instances of Enoch and Elijah are instructive illustrations. Indeed, Jesus Himself plainly shows both His promise and gift of the keys, as well as His promise and gift of eternal Life to all His redeemed congregation, to have been made to us all from the beginning; and the use of the keys and the consequences to be the same with the binding and loosing of our passage; and therefore to bring down upon the individual a strict proportionate judgment. And He gives a plain example; charging the scribes and Pharisees with shutting up the kingdom of heaven against men, and with making them to be children of the purgatorial fires of Gehenna twofold more than themselves. To give the passage at some length: "One is your Leader (or Guide), and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father (no man your *papa*, pope, or other subjecting<sup>2</sup> authority, *i. e.*, in spiritual things) upon the earth: for One is your Father who is in Heaven. Neither be ye called leaders<sup>3</sup>:

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Pet. 3:11, 12.

<sup>2</sup> While, however, no one by claim of authority may bind or loose, yet whoever causes a sinner voluntarily to turn from error thereby saves a soul from the death of sinfulness, with its judgment, and so begets in him new life, and in that way becomes his spiritual father; but only in this secondary sense. He uses his power to "loose." See Jas. 5:19, 20. 1 Cor. 4:14, 15. There would be greater agreement among Christians, if we should distinguish more carefully.

<sup>3</sup> The same Greek word, above uniformly translated "leader" or "leaders," occurs in the above extract three times. At the beginning it is contrasted with "Rabbi," and therefore has reference to a spiritual guide, instructor, and interpreter of truth, and shows that no one but Christ has dictatorial authority as such; all others being on a common level as brethren. The passage next guards us against the subtle self-deception of calling some specially revered ones spiritual fathers entitled to dictate to us what is truth. Then it again declares Christ to be our only Leader; and, that we may not servilely prove false to our independent judgment, even in

for One is your Leader, (even) the Christ. But the greater of you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be humbled: and whosoever shall humble himself shall be exalted. But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up (lit. key up) the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye go not in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, even for a pretext making long prayers: therefore shall ye receive greater judgment. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass the sea and the land to make one proselyte; and when he is made, ye make him twofold more a son of hell than yourselves. Woe unto you, ye blind guides," etc. In like manner, we have the declaration of our LORD again, that to bind and to loose is a common responsibility, only two chapters after that containing the similar declaration to Peter, or in Matt. 18:18. There, after directing an individual, whoever he may be, by all practical means to save a trespassing brother, in earnest words He proclaims to us all: "Verily I say unto you, What things soever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and what things soever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

10. How inconsistent indeed with the irrevocable gift of free-will, and with other scriptures, would be the interpretation of a single passage which should confine the keys of heaven to Peter only, or to the twelve disciples, and of all things to certain successors or representatives of Peter, not one of whom is so much as mentioned or even implied in the passage. On the contrary, to no one is it given in the inspired word to become a barrier between God and the individual soul of another. Certainly St. Peter never claimed for himself any special prerogative in the use of the keys; although, as continually happens among a number of persons nowadays, and as he had been accustomed to do before the keys were promised, he often became the spokesman for the others. But the opening to mankind both of the prison of the dead and of the heaven above, of which alone at this important crisis Jesus was speaking,<sup>1</sup> was

respect of the highest among men, it declares that the greater among them shall be their servant. It follows, that among Christians there is no spiritual leader whom we must implicitly follow; and, that we become great in proportion as we appeal to the independent judgment of our fellows, and seek to be their servants, and not their masters. We must persuade free-will beings—not compel them. The versions accordingly have "masters" in all three places, except that the r. v. in the first has "teacher."

<sup>1</sup> For the great object of Jesus was to call off the hopes of His disciples from an earthly to the heavenly kingdom above.

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the great and exclusive work "of God, our Saviour, who willeth all men to be saved, and to come unto a knowledge of truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, a man, Christ Jesus; who gave Himself a ransom for all, the proof (to be) in its own times."<sup>1</sup> In this affirmation that Christ Jesus is the only Mediator between God and man, and in the decided universality of the context, putting all upon a common level, and particularly in the gaining a knowledge of truth, we have another of the many passages which manifest the supernatural consistency of the inspired word, and which throw a strong light upon the proper interpretation of the promise of the keys. The passage forcibly recalls to our attention how the writer of the passage on another occasion withstood Peter to the face for his fallibility in compromising the truth of the gospel.<sup>2</sup> And how, immediately before this rebuke of Peter was mentioned, we find written in the same epistle: "But from those reputed to be somewhat, whatsoever they were maketh no matter to me,—God accepteth no man's person,—to me, verily, these that were of repute imparted nothing: but contrariwise, when they saw that I had been intrusted with the gospel of the uncircumcision, even as Peter was of the circumcision (for he that wrought in Peter for the apostleship of the circumcision wrought also in me for the Gentiles); and when they perceived the grace that was given unto me, they, James, Cephas (*i. e.*, Peter), and John, that were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, that we (should be) for the Gentiles, and they for the circumcision."<sup>3</sup>

11. St. Peter's representative character in receiving the promise of the keys and the declaration of the power of binding and loosing, —both adjuncts of the gift of free-will,—is, however, hardly called in question by theologians. Their contention is as to the extent of the representation. Long ago St. Ambrose wrote: "All we bishops have in St. Peter received the keys of the kingdom of heaven." Herein the old bishop of Milan evidently claimed for himself and his fellow bishops to have been officially addressed through St. Peter, and to have received in consequence equal powers with the twelve, because of their episcopal office; or not merely as redeemed human beings, or as disciples, but as apostles; which latter even the twelve at that time were not, and which the bishops of later ages, and in general those of the apostolic age, never were.<sup>4</sup> But in making this claim the old bishop at all events

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Tim. 2: 3-6.

<sup>2</sup> Gal. 2: 11-14.

<sup>3</sup> Gal. 2: 6-9.

<sup>4</sup> For, we should remember, although the episcopal office was created by the apostles and is held in regular succession from apostolic hands, still, it is not the apostolic office which was received



admitted St. Peter's representative character in the address to have extended both to the twelve disciples, and also through them to all bishops and their successors to the end of the world. And in this claim ecclesiasticism is necessitated to join, and to make it include all presbyters or priests, and their successors, in order to have a basis for its own exclusiveness and wondrous pretensions.<sup>1</sup> And yet, nowhere in the address, or elsewhere in the scriptures, are bishops, or presbyters, or the successors of any clerical office, either mentioned or implied as possessing exclusive functions in connection with the keys or with binding and loosing.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, as we have seen, the address contains an explicit promise of eternal

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and transmitted, that having been held only by those who had learned the gospel directly from the LORD Himself and had seen Him after His resurrection, and were able to bear witness thereto, or to His having burst the gates of Death and Hades (Acts 1:21, 22. 1 Cor. 9:1. John 15:27. Acts 2:24, 32; 4:2, 33; 17:18, 31, 32; 26:22, 23. Rom. 1:4, etc., etc). Accordingly, with usual consistency, in the inspired word those who held the episcopal office, such as Timothy, Titus, and the seven angels (*i. e.*, messengers) are never styled "apostles." Nor in early times, after what is admitted to have been the apostolic age, was any bishop so styled. His was a local office; while the apostolic mission was to all the world; and it pertained to that mission, (what cannot be said of course of bishops,) to be witnesses even to death of having seen the LORD after His resurrection. The notion that the title "apostle" was dropped by the bishops in honour of those of the LORD's appointment, and that the office was continued in the bishops, is therefore an invention of a later age. Where, forsooth, is the record of a fact so important? But if bishops never were apostles, the claim for them of what was said to St. Peter is an admission at all events of his representative character in respect of those not present at the address, and in a wider sense than is commonly affirmed; or that it extended to all men irrespectively. As for priests, they are not even claimed to have been present; thus adding to the force of the admission. See 2 Cor. 8:23, where Titus is distinguished, apparently, from the brethren of St. Paul called apostles. See also Rom. 16:7, 21. Phil. 2:25.

<sup>1</sup> The wider claim in this of the bishops and priests in all consistency negatives the exclusive claim of the pope. Both claims cannot stand together. If St. Peter represented all bishops, he did not solely represent the pope. And so, *a fortiori*, in respect of the priests.

<sup>2</sup> For in John 20:21-23 the apostles are also representative.

Life to all the redeemed; and seeing that an eternity of life in sin and misery would be the very reverse of encouragement, there immediately follows to the admittedly representative Peter the glorious promise of the keys to heaven, coupled with the appropriate warning to us all of our power to bind and loose, and of its ratification in heaven; thereby intimating the respective judgment upon each individual according to his deeds. And we have seen, that elsewhere in the scriptures, in respect of every individual matter spoken of in the address, there is a distinct application thereof to the members of the Divine Speaker's congregation.—that is to say, to all mankind; the sacrifice of the earthly for the heavenly on the part of each man, and his judgment before death, being soon after dwelt upon at greater length, and apparently in the address itself, or at all events in continuation thereof; and his power to bind or loose only two chapters thereafter; and again, in a later chapter, the improper use of the keys of the kingdom of heaven, even by the scribes and Pharisees, being stated and expressly condemned; and because of their proper use in the ages agone, Enoch and Elijah being narrated in the Old Testament to have passed through the open gates of the kingdom.

12. From what appears then in the address of Jesus, and from its conceded application to others than those present, the conclusion drawn above is, that the promises, declarations and warnings in the address are made ultimately to all mankind; although also intended to strengthen the twelve disciples to whom He was about to make known the emptiness of their earthly expectations. But apart from this immediate object, how fitting it was that the fundamental things of the gospel should be announced to men, when He was about to tell plainly, or no longer in parable, that He was on the point of finishing in success His mission to save the world. And how utterly insignificant in comparison, and unsuited to the exaltation of the occasion, especially when He was striving to alienate the minds of His disciples from earthly things altogether, to be Himself discussing and putting into their hearts things which pertain to this world, and to their personal dignity therein!—in other words, to ignore His own great mission, and the incomparable benefits which it was to confer upon all men, and to come down to an irrelevant talk about what should be done by successive priests, and bishops, and popes! Surely, in an address at such a time, the things about which He would naturally talk, yea, and about which He did talk, were the fundamental things which He Himself was to bring to pass through His speedily coming death and resurrection; such as the acquisition of Life and Immortality for all men, by His passage through the gates of Hades, the opening to all of the gates of heaven, the delay of sinful men in reaching them,



even of Peter himself and his fellow disciples, as shown in the *promise only* to all, made personally to him and them, (instead of the actual gift,) of the keys thereto, and the ever present judgment meanwhile upon each one, until he shall be worthy to enter therein.

13. In view of the history of the world under all religions, the efforts of the wise Master were ever directed to discourage, not to encourage, worldly aspirations in His ministers. And yet, how have they striven after rank and power; and most of all the bishop of Rome! To this day his cry continues for a kingdom on earth; in this, if in nothing else, making himself a successor of Peter; even in that which brought down upon Peter the appellation of "Satan"! For, swayed by this ambition, which was also that of the disciple of whom he claims to be the successor, the bishop fails to see that Jesus in the several promises of His address was not giving to Peter any special prerogatives, nor to any unnamed successors of Peter,<sup>1</sup> but, instead, was animating His disciples at a great crisis, and through them us all, with the certain hope of the kingdom of heaven above,—not putting before them a novel kingdom of the earth; for that was the very thing from which He was seeking to dissuade them. In truth, in the promise of the keys, He was opposing to the utmost, instead of inflaming, the selfish ambition which possessed all the disciples alike. And the narrative tells us how Peter received the unwelcome tidings of the failure of all his worldly plans and hopes. On the spur of the moment, he sought to restrain his Master from devoting Himself to death. In a dazed manner, apparently, he seemed to disregard the promised opening of heaven to men, and persistently clung to the wish of his ambitious heart. A Jewish, Messianic kingdom over all upon earth was also the current notion of the time among the Jews; and Peter had hoped to become its chief prince. And the same hope has ever actuated the papacy throughout its history; save that the pope for "Jewish" substitutes "Italian," and dispenses with

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<sup>1</sup> The apostolate was not a local office, and in St. Peter's case he was especially declared to be sent to the Jews, just as St. Paul's mission was to the Gentiles (Gal. 2:7, 8 quoted in ¶ 10). A visitation to Rome therefore of either apostle would have been only incidental, as a part of the larger mission of his apostolic office (Rom. 1:5-7, 13-15). Neither apostle had a local see; and no bishop of a local see can claim to be the special successor of either. In point of fact, St. Peter specially addresses his first epistle to Christians in parts of Asia Minor; and his second to Christians generally. See also, the addresses, in general, to divers churches of St. Paul's epistles. St. James writes to the twelve tribes scattered abroad. See also the epistles of S.S. John and Jude.

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the visible presence of the Messiah, making himself the visible, earthly king.

14. But Peter in this was tempting Jesus with the identical temptation which the devil had previously offered on the mount. On that occasion, to the holy Jesus the promise of the kingdom of the world, and the glory thereof, we may well believe, was made by the wily tempter in no gross form; but one which he thought most likely to appeal to a divinely constituted nature, and to comport with the mercy and goodness of God. The suggestion may have been, to spare men from having to undergo the æons of suffering which in general would be necessary to bring them voluntarily into a perfect condition. This would seem to have been the gist of the wily inducement offered to the Messiah to abandon His life-sacrificing mission for the kingdom of the world. In this wise the devil may have hoped to bring the Messiah Himself under his sway, and to prevent the salvation of men. But in whatever form the temptation was presented, this was its unholy purpose. It was a desperate effort both to commit Jesus to an act of treachery and disobedience to God, and to deprive men of their God-given freedom; although that freedom had been an irrevocable gift! It would have reduced men to hopeless slavery, and destroyed for ever their exalted rank as gods, and their future reign as kings and priests in the kingdom of heaven. The attempt, of course, was foolish in the extreme; nay, it was the culmination of diabolical folly. Indeed, in a spiritual sense, if the devil were not a fool, he would not be a devil; and if he were not the chief of fools, he would not be the chief of devils. Still, although his temptation was repulsive to the holy nature of Jesus, and its rebellious character could not be disguised from Him,<sup>1</sup> it found afterwards easy access into the hearts of His disciples; for, in their lower natures, they, like other men, were also children of the devil; and the kingdom of the world was just what they all desired. When Peter therefore would have induced his Divine Master to forego the great sacrifice which was to bring us salvation for ever from Hades and, in addition, the keys to heaven,—albeit with temporal judgment,—and was preferring instead his own ambitious

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<sup>1</sup> In spite of his folly, the devil seems to have been aware of this, and with brazen assurance expressly stipulated that Jesus should become his humble subject. He may have imagined that one so willing to sacrifice Himself for men would not hesitate at the dastardly sacrifice which he proposed. At any rate, he was aware that Jesus would perceive the wickedness of his offer, and that any kingdom of his giving would be tainted with evil. What he could not hide he therefore avowed.

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project,<sup>1</sup> he was literally following in the footsteps of the arch-tempter, and of course, incurred from the GOD of equal, irrespective justice a similar condemnation. Said our LORD: "Get thee

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<sup>1</sup> It is in finite ideas of the Infinite GOD that men are wont to seek a basis for their wild assumptions; and thereby with the best the devil often gains his opportunity. How easy it was for Peter, with ambition blinding him, to say to himself, May not the Omnipotent create a kingdom on earth subservient to the kingdom of heaven? Nay, has not the Son of GOD often spoken of just such a kingdom? And what better earthly kingdom could there be than one which has Himself for its visible King, with great princes and nobles of His own appointment? How much better this, than for Him to die and ascend to heaven, to come again to judge miserable, sinful men through æons of suffering? Surely a kingdom of His own creation could be made at once perfect, and its subjects incapable of backsliding. Why should evil exist at all? Or if a product only of the imagination, why should not the imagination itself be purged? With an illusive idea of the Infinite as our premise how easy it is to forget the self-evident truth that it is only possible for the natural to know the *super-natural* as it is revealed. For example, from the unchangeableness of GOD how easy it is to draw the conclusion, that in every particular, however minute, He must ever be doing the very same thing; or, *per contra*, since to begin to do would be to change, that He has not done, and cannot do, anything whatever; or that He cannot have the consciousness of two successive states of being; in all which things we would be His superiors! Or again, that all men and things must have existed always, and without a particle of change! In like reasoning, drawn from finite conceptions of GOD,—that is, because He is unchangeable, omnipotent, everywhere, a Spirit, all-merciful, etc.,—in our day, as formerly, the existence, and of course the potentiality, of matter have been denied, and pantheism enthroned; for, so long as the lower nature of man continues to exist, the folly inherited from the father of that nature will be abundantly manifested. In the case of him who takes the bit in his mouth with vain, unrevealed, philosophical conceits about the Infinite GOD, and has the love of the earthly tugging at his heart, what theories and systems may he not invent? And the loftier he is in intellect, the more seductive does he become. And yet, he is under like limitations with his inferiors; and no more than they can conceive the infinite. The drift of Peter's thoughts, which, in common with his fellow disciples, led him to prefer the glory of a kingdom on earth, we do not know. But we do know that such was their preference and expectation, and how they all had striven to be

behind me, Satan: thou art my snare:<sup>1</sup> for thou mindest not the things of God, but those of men." And knowing that the disciples all shared in Peter's ambition, and because throughout His words were for all alike, "Then said Jesus unto His disciples, If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever would save his life (as Peter wished Him to do) shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what should a man be profited, if he should gain the whole world (as the disciples were wishing), and forfeit his Life (and in this case, that eternal Life which at His death He was to gain for all)? or what shall a man give in exchange for his Life? For the Son of man is about<sup>2</sup> to come (the coming in logical sequence following immediately the gaining of the Life, although by anticipation taking place already) in the glory of His Father with His angels: and then shall He render to each man according to his doing. Verily I say unto you, There are some of them that stand here, who shall in nowise taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in His kingdom." That is to say, in order to destroy the hankering of the disciples after a miserable kingdom on earth, with its paltry temporal glory, He would give some of them a vision of that higher kingdom of which He had promised them the keys, and of its surpassing glory, and at the same time of the strict judgment upon men administered by Him from the higher kingdom according as each man binds or looses, of which judgment He had spoken in connection with the promise of the keys. And inasmuch

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the greatest in that kingdom, and that the ambition had been long cherished. In addition, he was naturally excited by his great love and solicitude for Jesus. And withal, the temptation, increased as it was by bitter disappointment, was so very sudden. But if temptation could thus overcome even Peter, how forcible is the warning to us; given as we are to mislead ourselves, and to be misled by others, into specious notions. And what if the temptation should come from the wisest and best? In truth we need to be on our guard against even a Peter, as well as against the rest of men: for so was our great Exemplar; and so also was St. Paul. And in this respect Peter has indeed successors. See John 11:7, 8, 12. Ex. 33:18-23. Deut. 29:29. Ps. 18:11, 24-28; 97:2; 131:1. John 1:18; 3:31. 1 Tim. 6:16, etc. I have treated the folly of reasoning from our ideas of infinity more at length in *The Purpose of the Æons*, as yet unpublished.

<sup>1</sup> The normal meaning, and forcibly applied to Peter; his love and genuine solicitude for Jesus, as well as of Jesus for him, making him the more entangling snare.

<sup>2</sup> Again the lit. rendering. See r. v., margin.



as the disciples James and John had been conspicuously eager in seeking for themselves the most prominent positions in the looked-for kingdom on earth, the one to be on the right, and the other on the left hand of Jesus, they were the ones selected by Him, with the ambitious Peter, who had been His tempter, to behold the promised vision. Thus the most disappointed of the disciples, and yet, it would seem the most spiritually advanced, were made the fitting eyewitnesses to men of the King of kings in His kingdom of glory, and of His constant coming in judgment, as well before death as after, upon each man according to his doing; or, not, as they were desiring, in a spirit of favouritism in respect of themselves; but those most honoured being the meekest and most self-sacrificing of men, and the places therefore at either hand of Jesus, so proudly coveted by the apostles, in their wished-for kingdom of the world, being occupied in the kingdom of heaven by Moses and Elijah, the worthy exemplars of the Law and the Prophets, or of the word of GOD by which men are judged.<sup>1</sup>

15. In the above narrative we find from beginning to end nothing expressed or implied to indicate that the apostles, including Peter, were addressed officially, or otherwise than as individuals. But even if the address had been to them as apostles, or to Peter alone, then, by the address itself, so limited, the claims of other officials in regard thereto would be silenced. And so, if the address had been in express terms, not only to those present, but to all who were apostles, and to their successors; because the very naming of one class would be the exclusion of every other, according to a well-known and universally accepted axiom. For what is said to another is not said to me; and what is given or promised to another is not given or promised to me. And no more does the hypothesis that gifts or promises were made to a certain class of officials, namely, to apostles, justify a claim to the gifts or promises by any other class of officials, to wit, by priests, or bishops or popes. If we take the scriptures for our guide, these were not apostles. Nay, on the occasion under consideration, they did not exist; and when, after the resurrection, priests and bishops were appointed, the priests were made subject to the bishops, and the bishops (for example, Timothy, Titus and the seven angels) to the apostles;—that is, so long as the apostolate continued. For the office became extinguished upon the death of the last apostle who had seen Jesus after the resurrection, and had been personally instructed by Him; since it was their personal, independent testimony unto death of what they themselves had actually seen and heard, which gave to their office its unique value and the essential reason for its existence.

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<sup>1</sup> John 12:48; 5:44-47. Ps. 147:15-20; 148:3-11.



In other respects its functions could readily be supplied by ordinary officials; while its continuance in other hands would have tended to militate against the equality of Christians as brethren and the LORD's freemen. As for the pope, he is nowhere mentioned in the scriptures as a legitimate official of the church; and on this occasion there was not the most distant allusion to such an official, legitimate or illegitimate. But why speak of officials of any sort in connection with the passage? For in the entire narrative there is nothing said about even the apostolic office; and, plainly, nothing about bishops; not to speak of priests or popes; and the introduction of any of them into the passage is altogether the result of bald assumptions. And here it may be as well to note the inconsistency of those who maintain the claims of these officials, or of any of them, and notwithstanding insist that it was the acknowledgment by Peter, the individual, of the Messiahship and Divinity of Jesus, which was being rewarded. If a personal reward was given to Peter for a personal act, why, pray, should others claim his reward, and especially those who at the critical juncture could not have joined in the act, seeing that they were still unborn, or were not present?

16. In truth, inasmuch as the address of Jesus was primarily intended to strengthen His immediate followers, then present, against His rapidly approaching death, He naturally spoke of things which were appropriate to His purpose,—not of ecclesiastical officers, or of aught that pertained to them. To speak of these,—however useful in their place,—would have served no good purpose, nay, would have been downright trifling, with men who were looking eagerly forward to the gaining by their Messiah of the whole world for His kingdom, and to their becoming mighty princes therein. It certainly would not have comported with the kind and merciful heart and lofty dignity of Jesus; and it would not have helped the disciples to bear up bravely, when told immediately afterwards that He was to be torn from them by a violent death, and that their all-absorbing and brilliant hopes and expectations were idle dreams. In point of fact, that which was most calculated, from a mere earthly standpoint, to bolster up the human heart with confidence, namely, the power of working miracles, had already been granted to the apostles. But powers such as had been commonly exercised by the old prophets of the Jewish Church, however great they really were, could not now, after that the Messiah had come, satisfy them for the loss of the regal splendour to be enjoyed with Him, according to their dreams, in the kingdom of the whole world. Nor could any apostolic powers compensate for the dreadful future which, according to the words of Jesus, loomed up before them in place of their dreams. To appreciate what would have

been the real effect upon them of a promise of the alleged apostolic powers,—how it would have added fuel to the flame of disappointment,—it would be well to recall the earthly side of the apostolate as depicted by an apostle himself; one, too, who had not been flattering himself with the visions of the twelve, and was not dazed with their disappointment. For the noble St. Paul was called to the apostolate after those visions had vanished from among the followers of the Crucified; and he became too much concerned about the spiritual welfare of others, to have regard for the estimation in which he was held of men, or for superiority of position among them. In the spirit of self-sacrifice, therefore, which Jesus on the occasion under consideration had enforced upon all men, and with no taint of ecclesiasticism, but regardful of all alike as brethren, St. Paul tells Christians not to go beyond what has been written, and create differences among them; adding in respect of their spiritual equality, “Ye have reigned without us; yea, and I am obligated that ye have reigned, that we also might reign with you. For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as devoted to death: for we have been made a spectacle unto the world, both to angels and to men . . . we are made as the filth of the world, the scourging of all things, until now.”<sup>1</sup> Since therefore the apostolate, which the twelve had received already, and therewith the power of working miracles, was by no means a comforting possession, and the prospect of its exercise by no means attractive in a worldly sense, something of more potent influence and of a permanent character, even the promise of eternal life in heaven,—that Life and Immortality for which men had so long sighed,—was required to give to the disciples strength of endurance, now that their earthly visions were setting in gloom, and the dismal future depicted by St. Paul was rising upon them. It was therefore both appropriate and expedient that Jesus should make to them this soul-strengthening promise, and should couple therewith the emphatic warning of the duly proportioned judgment overhanging them from heaven according as they bound or loosed. As just intimated, they already knew in measure what the burden of the apostolate meant, for they had in a worldly sense tasted of its bitterness. Therefore, however, they had been buoyed up by their earthly anticipations; and now, with these taken away, and Jesus Himself killed, they foresaw how the bitterness of their earthly lot would terribly increase, and would be theirs through life, and be followed, as in His case, by a violent death. Even if they had not already had some experience in the matter, Jesus soon took care to let them know still more explicitly what was before them; telling them, as we

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. 4: 1-13.

have seen, that their salvation, and that of all others, depended upon a life of self-denial; and intimating that they would be required to sacrifice life itself; and adding, as at the first, a declaration of the judgment of heaven constantly going on upon each man according to his doing. Jesus thus the second time coupled His soul-strengthening promise of Immortal Life in heaven with a warning of exact judgment from thence administered; showing once more that His words applied to every man. And for their greater assurance He promised to some of them, as we have seen, a vision before their death of heaven itself, and of the Son of man coming in His kingdom of glory, and judging mankind just as He had said.

17. In opposition to the incongruous assumptions of ecclesiasticism, I dwell upon the point, that Jesus was schooling His apostles to bear His unexpected disclosures; not refraining, it may well be, in respect of that important point, from considerable repetition; that the reader may realise the full force and the relevancy, fitness and consistency of the words of Jesus, from the beginning to the end of the narrative, with the occasion that called them forth, and the utter irrelevancy, unfitness and inconsistency of the opposing assumptions in regard to those words. For unquestionably, the promise of Immortality to all men, and of heaven itself to the deserving, coupled with the declaration of continual judgment upon every man according to his doing, were the appropriate things to be held out to the apostles, and that were best calculated to stay their hearts on the trying occasion which we have been considering. And they are also the very things which enable us all to bear up against the ills of life; even as their ultimate application, without which they would hardly have appeared reasonable to the minds and very instincts of the twelve, was made irrespectively to all the congregation of the redeemed. Their particular application, however, was so utterly foreign to the apostolic office, that no successors thereto, such as Paul and Barnabas, had any share in that special application, seeing that they were not actors in the crisis which called forth at the time the stimulating words of Jesus. In view, rather, of His actual object in giving them utterance, and of the vital need under the circumstances of offering to His immediate followers inducements to steadfastness greater than this world can bestow, which, in particular, should far more than counter-balance their visions of earthly glory in a kingdom of the whole world, how farcical, let me say again, appear all interpretations of the passage which would without authority therefrom make it apply to ecclesiastical officials only, such as priests, and bishops, and popes!—in short, to the very thing from which Jesus was seeking to wean them; even to a sort of kingdom of the world; one like the

other,<sup>1</sup> yet of novel character, and of comparative insignificance in respect of what had been desired, and which was deprived of the Messiah as its visible Head; while, however, there was substituted in His place a multitude of mere human beings, not clad like the scribes and Pharisees of old, as well as the rest of men, with the power, incidental to free-will, of binding and loosing, and of gaining heaven by mighty strivings, and of helping or retarding the progress of others thitherward, but armed also, respectively, with the tremendous authority, by an arbitrary act, to forgive or retain another's sins, and thus, by the same authority, to shut or open the gates of heaven to those who would enter therein, and by logical consequence the gates of Hades likewise to those who would escape from those gates.<sup>2</sup>

18. If men were untrammelled in judgment, and were not under the spell of usurpations which gradually grew up in the long centuries, no official claims based upon this passage, however insignificant, much less the enormous supernatural powers which have been rashly assumed because thereof, would be acquiesced in by so many good and earnest souls, whose only apparent faults are an unfortunate, fell spirit of partisanship that disposes them zealously to accept the dogmas and customs of their particular church, and especially those which distinguish it from other denominations, and even to take pride and find comfort in shirking and putting upon others the solemn responsibility which pertains to their own God-given judgment. As though he that has eyes to see should not see; or that has ears to hear must not hear! In cases like these it is evident, that the appropriate judgment is a "strong delusion," "an energy of error" (*energeian planēs*),<sup>3</sup> causing them to swallow voraciously the pernicious falsehoods of their "blind guides," and at the same time to acquire an unnatural distaste for plain, ordinary truth.<sup>4</sup> It was doubtless not without

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Rev. 17:8, 11.

<sup>2</sup>The logical consequence manifests itself in measure in masses for the arbitrary deliverance of the dead from the pains of exact judgment.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Th.2: 11.

<sup>4</sup>"Hear now this, O foolish people, and without understanding; who have eyes, and see not; who have ears, and hear not. Fear ye not me? saith the LORD: . . . A wonderful and horrible thing is come to pass in the land: the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof? . . . To whom shall I speak and testify, that they may hear? behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: behold, the word of the LORD is become unto them a reproach; they have no delight



intention, that the words, "But the Son of man having come, shall He find the faith on the earth?" precede the parable concerning those "that trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and made naught of others."<sup>1</sup> For no man can do his part in preserving the faith, whose implicit trust in others makes him blindly confident of his own freedom from error; and who in consequence neither realises the necessity to be watchful and diligent, and to examine himself, and prove for his own self, whether he be in the faith, nor uses as the primary source of light what St. Peter himself declares to be the unerring word which was given for his individual guidance when in the dark; even the sure word of instruction which comes not from man, but from the Holy Spirit, and, like other divine gifts, is without respect of persons; its interpretation being not private, but common to all.<sup>2</sup> Let us take due note, that it is no less a person than St. Peter himself who thus reminds us of what the Psalmist had said so long before, even that the word of God is a lamp unto the feet, and a light unto the path. And if the Psalmist's words just here are milder than the apostle's, it is because, doubtless, he had already declared a very few verses before, how, by availing ourselves personally of the brilliancy of the lamp of in-

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in it. Therefore I am full of the fury of the LORD." Jer. 5:21, 22, 30, 31, and 6:10, 11. "Forasmuch as the sons of Jonadab the son of Rechab have performed the commandment of their father which he commanded them, but this people hath not hearkened unto me; therefore thus saith the LORD, the God of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I will bring upon Judah and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem all the evil that I have pronounced against them: because I have spoken unto them, but they have not heard; and I have called unto them, but they have not answered." Jer. 35:16, 17. And see ch. 36. Ezek. 12:1, 2. Zech. 7:11. Ps. 78:1-8, etc.

<sup>1</sup> Luke 18:8, 9. "But the Son of man *having come*." It is the past tense. Just before God's vengeance is threatened; and the Son having come in vengeance, will men repent and believe? After this comes the declaration as to the self-righteous, and the parable of the Pharisee and the publican. In truth, in spite of the judgment upon Jerusalem, that self-righteous nation and their church did not turn unto the faith, but brought upon themselves for ages additional judgments. Our LORD's idea is the degradation of soul produced by narrow, self-righteous partisanship; and the illustration is the spirit of the proud Pharisee. The faith therefore, of which He speaks, is of the heart, not of the mind; or character, and not orthodoxy.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. 13:5. 2 Pet. 1:19-21. Is. 51:4.



spiration, we may gain more understanding than teachers can give, or even than the teachers possess, at whose feet men are so wont to surrender their manhood.<sup>1</sup> For it is only by the humble, patient, and devout study of, as well as by obedience to, divine revelation that teachers and scholars alike can possess themselves of those qualifications which form the heavenly character, and fit one for heaven. And, certainly, it is not by abject subservience to authority, that man acquires the free spirit which the Bible inculcates, coupled with the genuine humility which comes from the frequent failures of his independent efforts; or that he learns how to bear the manly burden of responsibility, and to fight bravely against error, and to be watchful, careful, earnest, truth-loving, diligent, painstaking, and the like. On the other hand, it is through just such a spirit of subservience that the stickler for authority degenerates into a helpless, dependent, unprogressive parasite, and loses out of his own hands, because of his dependent condition, that most necessary weapon both for offence and defence, even "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."<sup>2</sup> As St. Paul would say (when using the figure of the lamp) of the man who slavishly relies upon another to do his thinking, and neglects his own gifts, he quenches the Spirit,—his own as well as that of God,—and makes nought of its prophesyings or teachings.<sup>3</sup> And just as our LORD tells us, so, when unchangeably confident that he is in the right, because of his blind trust in guides, he not only makes nought of what the scriptures say, but of those who depend upon them. In consequence, in things which make for heavenly progress, his tendencies are to become idle, unfruitful, narrow-minded, superstitious, saturated with partisan prejudice and bitterness, and altogether the opposite of him whom inspiration significantly styles "the LORD's freeman";—of him who, obeying the command which follows this designation, is no servant of men, but maintains his spiritual freedom, although in worldly position he may be a bondman.<sup>4</sup>

19. "But the Son of man having come, shall He find the faith on the earth?" For in every denomination of Christians how few, in truth, are the LORD's freemen! How almost universal is the subservience to authority! In what follows this alarming

<sup>1</sup> Ps. 119:99, 105.

<sup>2</sup> Eph. 6:17.

<sup>3</sup> "Quench not the Spirit; do not make nought of prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from every form of evil." 1 Th. 5:19-22.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. 7:22, 23. "Hear this, all ye peoples; give ear, all ye inhabitants of the world: both low and high, rich and poor together." Ps. 49:1, 2.

question of the Judge of men, He makes it plain, that He is speaking, not so much of orthodoxy, as of conduct;—of the truly saving faith that means obedience; and in its need looks to Him for light, from whom every good and perfect gift proceeds<sup>1</sup>; studying earnestly His illuminating word both to believe and do aright; remembering how He invites as well as commands His free-will creation, and with such frequent repetition, again and again saying, “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.”<sup>2</sup> The illustration which Jesus gives of what He had said is that of a proud Pharisee, who, trusting to the infallible judgment of the rulers and Pharisees of the Church,<sup>3</sup> felt sure of being in the right, and disdained the lowly publican that in self-abasement was depending upon God, and who in consequence “went back to his house made righteous instead of the other”; the one having the faith which develops heavenward, and the other that which degenerates.<sup>4</sup> The very gift of revelation implies the duty of its full, reverent, and unrestrained use, and on him who stands in the way thereof lies the weighty burden of justifying his dangerous position.<sup>5</sup> That the Bible should with exceeding care add greatly to this burden by giving an apparently innumerable array of miscellaneous texts enforcing the duty, and never one to the contrary, shows how important the duty is in the eye of God. And it shows still more. For consider, in all the centuries, how “the many,” especially those of influence, or in ecclesiastical positions, have continually evinced an inherent dislike to the exercise of individual judgment in religious matters, caring

<sup>1</sup>Jas. 1: 17.

<sup>2</sup>Matt. 11: 15; 13: 9, 14, 15, 43. Mk. 4: 9, 23; 7: 16; 8: 18. Luke 8: 8; 9: 44; 14: 35. Rev. 2: 7, 11, 17, 29; 3: 6, 13, 22; 13: 9. Note the care with which the saying is re-recorded also in the different gospels. “And these are they which were sown on the good ground; such as hear and receive the word, and bring forth fruit, one thirty-fold, and one sixty, and one an hundred. And He said unto them, Is the lamp brought to be put under the bushel, or under the bed, and not to be set on the stand? For there is nothing hid, which should not be made known; nor was anything kept secret, but that it should come abroad. If any man have ears to hear, let him hear. And He said unto them, Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you; and unto you that hear shall more be added. For he that hath, to him shall be given; and he that hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he hath.” Mk. 4: 20-25. See Preface.

<sup>3</sup>John 7: 48.

<sup>4</sup>Luke 18: 8-14.

<sup>5</sup>“Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken. Is. 1: 2.

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more for orthodoxy than character. That therefore the numerous writers of the Bible, who were of such different periods, and places, and walks in life, should uniformly and independently recognise all men to whom the Bible is given to be on a common level in its interpretation, or each one to have the same authority therein with every other; thus, in spite of the general tendency outside of the sacred book, keeping true to what sound reason and logical consistency require;—is one of the conspicuous supernatural proofs of the inspiration of those writers. It is a miracle which could not have happened in the natural course of things; and it demonstrates what St. Peter declares, that they were moved by the Spirit. And let us keep well in memory, that St. Peter prefaces his declaration (when we interpret what he says according to invariable Greek usage) by affirming, that the interpretation of scripture is not exclusive, but public and common; and that he prefaces this affirmation with a concordant statement, namely, that we do well to take heed to the word of prophecy as unto a light that shineth to illuminate our darkness. Observe, then, how a correct rendering shows the consistency of the apostle with himself and with the other sacred writers. But how would it be, if we introduce the misinterpretation of ecclesiasticism? Should we not make of St. Peter's words a rope of sand; and in their utter lack of coherence be compelled to admit, not only that he was not infallible, but that he was not even inspired? And in what way would the claims of the priests, the bishops, or the pope be thereby substantiated? For that matter, what connection is there anyway between these ecclesiastics and the words of St. Peter which we have had under consideration, seeing that in none of them are they so much as mentioned? In view however of the positive statements contained in the words of the inspired apostle, declaring the common right and duty of men both to take heed to and to interpret all teaching of scripture<sup>1</sup> for their own special guidance, and even because of the darkness of their hearts, it is obvious that no man or council of men may lawfully assert a claim to judge for others in the interpretation of scripture, and still less to be infallible therein. And inasmuch as such claims are in the face of a wonderful harmony of inspiration to the contrary, and can only gain colour by causing the Bible to appear inconsistent and self-destructive, they abundantly make manifest the nature of the tree of which they are the fruit. They certainly cannot be maintained when, as the Bible directs, we compare scripture with scripture, and in particular with the words and actions of

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<sup>1</sup> The strict form of Peter's language is, "that every prophecy (or, *all teaching*) of scripture is not of exclusive (or, *private*) interpretation."

St. Peter himself, and of his fellow apostles, and above all with the many, most emphatic sayings of our LORD on other occasions.

20. It would be pertinent, if brevity permitted, to treat more at length of the right of private judgment as continually set forth in the scriptures, and of the gradual assertion and acceptance of ecclesiastical claims in opposition thereto; and to show, in particular, how in the Western Church the pretensions of the bishop of Rome, after long centuries had passed away, slowly rose and matured, owing to his favourable position in the capital of the Roman Empire, at the centre of civilisation, intelligence, and culture; and how, on the other hand, the Eastern Church escaped his domination, chiefly because of the establishment by Constantine of a new capital in the eastern part of the empire, long before even in the west those pretensions had been put forth. What great advantages the bishop of the old capital derived from his position may be seen from the custom which grew up in the west for the bishops of the more rural districts to resort to him for advice; the result being, after the origin and reason of the practice had become obscured under the mantle of time, and antiquity had begun to lend its peculiar sanctity thereto, that the advice was given with a deepening colour of authority. Moreover, on the principle that to those that have more shall be given, at the corresponding loss of those that have not,<sup>1</sup> other circumstances from time to time increased the importance of his bishopric.<sup>2</sup> Thus in 325 the Council of Nice gave its approval to the association of certain neighbouring dioceses under his jurisdiction as metropolitan; similar jurisdictions having been elsewhere established, and the provinces of Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch having been for a considerable period thereafter the greatest in the church. But such an honour, while adding greatly to the dignity and influence of the bishop of Rome, demonstrates at once how far he still was from being recognised as a full-fledged pope. The three ancient writers hereinabove mentioned afford conclusive evidence also, and of a later date, to the same effect. For Ambrose, who became archbishop of Milan in 374, and died in 397, and who was educated in Rome, makes his deductions from the address of Jesus to Peter only in behalf of himself and his fellow bishops, saying nothing whatever of any special claims of the Roman bishop. In fact, the jurisdiction of Ambrose was altogether independent of that of Rome. In like manner, Augustine, who, though an African Numidian by birth, had spent much time in Rome, and also in Milan, where he was baptised by Ambrose, and was the bishop of Hippo, in Numidia, from 395 to 430, says again nothing whatever of papal claims, as we have seen, even when interpreting

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 13:12.

<sup>2</sup> Gieseler, I., § 58.

the same address; indicating that he also either did not know of any such claims while so interpreting, or that they had not at the time gained sufficient importance to make an impression upon his mind.<sup>1</sup>

21. The third of the above mentioned writers to whom for brevity I must confine myself was Vincent of Lerins; the very object of whose *Commonitory*, written in 434, was to guide the individual to all proper sources of divine truth. His ignorance of any exclusive claims of the see of Rome over the whole church is in like manner conclusive evidence against their existence in his day. And this evidence is the more interesting and valuable, not only because of its object, but also by reason of the high esteem which he expresses for the Roman see and its then bishop. His argument throughout is based upon the right of private judgment; only he would guide the individual to its proper exercise.<sup>2</sup> He

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<sup>1</sup> Augustine however considered every church founded by an apostle a sort of papal authority in itself, and that one who was not in communion with such a church was a schismatic (*Contra literas Petiliani*, ii., 51; and the other authorities quoted in Gieseler I., § 94). From this we may infer, that a main source of the papacy in the Western Church, in which Rome was the only church so founded, was the rise of the several patriarchates and their confirmation by the Council of Nice. A narrowing process was thus commenced, by which authority was limited to fewer and still fewer hands, with the result in the Western Church of the papacy. The view of Augustine, notwithstanding, was singular, for Ambrose, by whom he was baptised, and whom he so exceedingly admired, was altogether independent of Rome, as well in jurisdiction, as in matters of faith and practice. And as an African bishop Augustine must have known all about the contentions against Rome of Cyprian and his fellow African bishops, and their spirit of equality, and complete independence of what Rome determined. At all events, the various sayings of Augustine must be interpreted in the light of this peculiar view; which itself showed that he had no thought of the papal claims of the bishop of Rome, but regarded his see as on a par with the apostolic sees of the East; just as Tertullian before him, and Vincent shortly afterwards, looked to them for light, but not for leading. What led Augustine to his view was to make a point in the zeal of controversy against his opponents.

<sup>2</sup> Vincent opens with a statement of his object, and shows throughout an utter ignorance of any infallibility in the bishop of Rome. "The *right* of private judgment is assumed as the basis of the treatise, the *duty* assumed throughout. How utterly unnecessary the rule of Vincent, and all the minuteness of his cautions concerning its application, had the Church in his time known of an infallible



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declares the holy scriptures to be the supreme external guide to spiritual truth; but for a case where it is not sufficiently clear, he lays down his celebrated rule, to wit, "that we hold that which has been believed everywhere, always, and by all." As a subordinate means of enlightening the judgment, he, among other things, calls attention to "an apostolical see," having particularly in view, being in the West, that of Rome; because, doubtless, it was the only see of the Western Church wherein apostles had taught, and was best known to his readers.<sup>1</sup> In this advice especially in regard to the familiarity

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spokesman," etc. *Translator's Preface* of the Baltimore edition of 1247. And see note "D" on § 1 of Wm. Reeves.

<sup>1</sup> It was with Vincent, as to apostolic sees, simply a matter of evidence. Quoting St. Paul in Gal. 1: 6-9, he comments: "What is that which he says, 'But though we?' Why not rather, 'But though I?' It signifies, that though Peter, though Andrew, though John, though, in fine, the whole band of the apostles should preach to you another gospel beside that we have preached, let him be an anathema." *Com.*, I., c. viii., § 12. Evidently Vincent knew no infallibility outside the Bible. In respect of the bidding of St. Paul not to receive another gospel even from an angel from heaven, Vincent says, "Not that the only and heavenly angels are now capable of sin"; but in regard to Peter and the whole band of the apostles he makes no such comment. *Ib.* Rather, "in the ancient Church itself" he requires the testimony not "of any one part, but of the whole," as required by his fundamental rule, c. v. § 8. Oblivious of any superiority of Roman over other bishops, he writes: "These, then, are the men whose writings were recited in that Council (of Ephesus), as those either of judges or else of witnesses." He then names with commendation, first, seven bishops of the Eastern Church, and goes on: "But that it may be shown that not Greece alone, or only the East, but also the Western and Latin world had always so held (*i. e.* as did the others), there were read there also certain epistles of St. Felix the martyr, and St. Julius, bishops of Rome" (indifferently mentioned); and then he ends with "the most blessed Cyprian, bishop of Carthage and martyr," and St. Ambrose whom he had previously eulogised. *Com.*, II., c. iii. (or xxx.). The title "Pope" is here omitted, though Vincent sometimes prefixes it to the name of a Roman bishop. Why not here as a mark of distinction from the other bishops named? The truth is, the title at the period was often given to bishops, in spite of the command to call no one on earth "Father," *i. e.*, as depriving of his liberty the child of God. Thus Jerome inscribes a letter to Augustine, "To the most honourable Pope." As late as 1073 the title in the Roman Church was restricted to the bishop of Rome. In the

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arising from propinquity, he follows Tertullian, who (about A.D. 200) writes: "Run over the apostolic churches, wherein the very chairs of the apostles still remain in view in those places; wherein their authentic letters are read, sounding forth the voice and representing the face of each one respectively. Is Achaia nearest to thee? Thou hast Corinth. If thou art not far from Macedonia, thou hast Philippi, thou hast Thessalonica. If thou canst go into Asia, thou hast Ephesus. If thou art adjacent to Italy, thou hast Rome, from whence to us also an authority is at hand."<sup>1</sup> Observe in this, how Tertullian in Africa, but little over a century after apostolic times, puts the churches wherein apostles had taught on one common level, to be indifferently consulted, according as this or that church chanced to be handy. Of Rome he simply says, that it was convenient to those in proximity to Italy. His words show also how early the dust of antiquity was obscuring the faith; and that no secret, reliable revelation had descended from the apostles through the episcopal office, or otherwise; and further, that no special claims of Rome had obtruded themselves upon the mind of the writer. And in like manner Vincent indicates the like condition of things to have prevailed for over two centuries thereafter; as is the general testimony of the period. The argument against Rome is decidedly stronger than if the several writers had expressly arrayed themselves in opposition to papal claims on the part of that see.<sup>2</sup> For such opposition, however reasonable, would,

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Greek Church it is still used even of priests, like "Father" in the Latin. It is also to this day a title of the patriarch of Alexandria.

<sup>1</sup> *De Praescript. Haer.*

<sup>2</sup> In regard to the existence of things in ancient times it is ever negative testimony which is the more valuable,—what was not said, more than what was said. Indeed, when we consider the multiplied disputations of the early ages, and how, so very naturally the same writer would differ from time to time on an important matter from what he himself had previously concluded,—of which we have an example in Augustine's interpretation of our passage, and in respect of the disputations an earlier example in the discussion between Polycarp, who was said to have been ordained bishop of Smyrna by St. John, and Anicetas bishop of Rome, as to the proper time of keeping Easter,—when, I repeat, we consider so many differences in early times, we perceive at once that the early bishops in their positive statements have only ordinary claims upon the attention, and that there was in them no mysterious deposit of truth received from the apostles outside the sacred writings, as is assumed without proof by the advocates of the papacy. It follows, that Vincent's great rule is our only safe guide, and that early individual state-

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without reason, surely have been taken advantage of to imply the legitimacy of the claims, and their existence from apostolic times; although more might be claimed on the same ground in behalf of the heresies which took their rise in the early centuries as to the divine personality of Jesus Himself.<sup>1</sup> But a complete ignorance of papal claims by writers who were telling of the best sources of Christian knowledge, and who spoke favourably of apostolic sees, and of Rome itself, and yet, though of the West, gave the only Western apostolic see no preference over such sees in the East, save that Rome was nearer and better known to Christians in the West, and was frequented by believers from all directions,<sup>2</sup>—all this, to an unprejudiced, non-partisan mind, would seem to be a positive death-blow to the assumptions which have been made in behalf of that see.

22. Nay, the very resort to apostolic sees tells mightily of itself against those assumptions, and shows, in particular, an utter ignorance of the infallibility which has been set up in later times for the Roman bishop. When indeed, through misinterpretation or other evil influences, the light of holy scripture seemed to illumine but dimly, or not at all, the darkness of men's hearts, and heresies were abounding, and bishops assuming lordly airs and powers, and receiving undue deference bordering on, if not equivalent to actual worship, and the church was fast becoming a kingdom of the world, notwithstanding the scathing rebuke of our LORD to Peter for wishing that very thing, and good men, pursuant to GOD's ordinary plan of development, were being sorely tried, with no recognised infallible teacher granted to them on whom to lean as parasites and bring degradation upon all their manly and self-ennobling characteristics—under such circumstances, it was but natural that they should have turned in their multiplied perplexities to the great churches which had received instruction from apostolic lips. It

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ments are as much open to criticism as those of a writer of the present day.

<sup>1</sup> Later on, the manner of writing seems to imply that Rome was beginning to make pretensions that were to be resisted. Thus Jerome takes pains to speak of the bishop of that city as holding his part of the episcopate as much as the bishop of Eugubium, and no more.

<sup>2</sup> Gieseler, I., § 51, n. 10; quoting also and explaining Iren. iii., 3. The frequent coming to Rome of believers from all directions had much to do with preserving at the first the purity of the faith both there and elsewhere, until the rise of the papacy, which its final tendency was to bring about and greatly aid.

might have been a surer plan perhaps, in general, to have sought out answers to vexing questions among the more humble, but independent churches, which were also far removed from each other, and especially from those that were of great wealth, and corresponding importance and influence,—from churches without worldly pretensions or ambitions, where the lowly members were more likely to be found treading in all humility in the old paths in which their fathers had trodden before them; each of such churches being, as St. Paul had told Timothy of each of those of the Ephesian diocese, “a household of God, which is a congregation of a living God, a pillar and base (or seat) of the truth.”<sup>1</sup> At all events, what little reliance is to be placed upon the stability of the faith in apostolic churches, even in the days of an apostle who there himself became a teacher, is made manifest by the LORD Himself. For to the great church of Ephesus, the very one of whose subordinate churches St. Paul had spoken to Timothy as above, wherein also St. John, the last of the apostles, in his old age abode, Jesus commanded to be written as follows: “But I have against thee, that thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou hast fallen, and repent, and do the first works; else I come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of its place, except thou repent.”<sup>2</sup> And yet, this same church St. Paul had warned with great solemnity many years before of the corrupt teaching that was to afflict them after his death; and indeed had spent three years among them repeating his warnings and “thoroughly testifying the Gospel of the Grace of God”; to wit, the Gospel which told of “the turning to God, and Faith, that (namely) in our LORD Jesus Christ”; “keeping back,” the apostle expressly states, “nothing that was profitable,” and therefore nothing that was communicated to only Timothy their bishop; but, he adds, “proclaiming to you and teaching you, in public, and from house to house, all the counsel of God.”<sup>3</sup> What strong words are these! Let us pause then to note how throughout this discourse to the presbyters of Ephesus St. Paul, moved by the Holy Spirit, completely disposes of the barefaced invention of a later age, whereby, it is hoped, that is to say, by means of alleged esoteric revelations from the apostles through the episcopal office, to account for the appearance from time to time of the respective novelties of

<sup>1</sup> 1 Tim. 3:15. See § 75 (a).

<sup>2</sup> Rev. 2:4, 5. *I. e.*, “If thy light, or teaching, is not gospel light, it shall be removed.”

<sup>3</sup> Acts 20:17-32. For the translations see the Greek text.—“*The Faith, that in,*” etc. See for similar phraseology 1 Tim. 1:14 (with 15), and 2 Tim. 1:13 (with 9, 10,) and § 22 (a), ¶ 2.

Rome.<sup>1</sup> In apostolic teaching, however, we see how favoured was the church of Ephesus; and that it was the last of all to receive instruction from apostolic lips. And it not only had the benefit of teaching from the apostles Paul and John, but most likely from Peter also, on one or more of his missionary circuits, and probably from other apostles. And yet, thus early, even in St. John's day, did it require to be rebuked by the LORD! And thus early also did the congregations, which St. Paul had called pillars and seats of the truth, cease to be perfect examples thereof to men! Whoever, in fact, takes due note of the changes constantly going on among men, and how important these become in a single century, will hardly rely upon the stability of belief in individual churches, whether apostolic or otherwise. The whole body of mankind, that is to say, the great congregation of the redeemed, is verily founded in Immortal Life upon the immovable Rock, which is Christ;<sup>2</sup> for the works of that which is changeable have nought to do with laying of a Foundation which is unchangeable; "but the Son of man having come" in judgment upon those works where really required, "shall He find the Faith on the Earth?" Of all the seven churches of the Revelation, Smyrna only was not reprov'd; and its candlestick alone still remains in its place. And has Rome made no changes; which for centuries made no pretensions that demanded extraordinary attention, but now claims to be supreme in all things over the churches? <sup>3</sup> Rather, in many things beside, it should be

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<sup>1</sup> The deposit of 2 Tim. 1: 12, 14, was of the ministry of the gospel to all, at all times, and so far therefore from being secret, was committed to Timothy in the presence of many witnesses (2 Tim. 2: 2).

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. 10: 4.

<sup>3</sup> Many things contributed from time to time to augment the power of Rome, one of which, the Council of Sardice (347), is of frequent mention. Says a writer: "It has been rendered chiefly remarkable by a canon authorising (Julius, who was then) the bishop of Rome to receive appeals from any parties who might feel aggrieved by the decisions of provincial synods, and to order a rehearing of the cause, should it appear to him to have been improperly decided. . . . Rightly viewed, the Sardican decree, which is candidly allowed by an eminent Roman Catholic (Petrus de Marca) to be the foundation of papal power, is, in reality, fatal to its claims, inasmuch as it disproves the existence of any such appellate jurisdiction" previously. John A. Baxter, *The Church History of England*, pp. 19, 20. The decree was personal to Julius only; though, even so, it contravened the fifth canon of the Nicene Council constituting provincial synods final courts of appeal. Yet Pope Zosimus (417-418) represented to the African bishops the



asked, When shall her changes cease? As late as December 8, 1854, the dogma of the immaculate conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which had been growing into favour from about the twelfth century, became a part of her faith; and in 1870 that of the infallibility of the pope was promulgated by the Vatican Council; both additions to the faith occurring in less than a quarter of the last century!

23. More has been said than was intended in illustration of the universal silence of the writers of the early ages in regard to the existence of the papacy. Still, an additional example of the ignorance of any claims of the see of Rome above other sees is of such a remarkable nature that its introduction here seems excusable. The author of the *Clementines*, himself a Roman, and there educated, who wrote toward the end of the second century, in the epistle prefixed to his work, notwithstanding he is the first ancient writer to claim St. Peter as a bishop of Rome, and thus evinced a strong natural tendency to honour his native city, displayed, nevertheless, an utter absence of knowledge of any papal pretensions on the part of that see; but, on the contrary, represented even the apostle himself to have written to St. James, as "to the lord and bishop of the holy church"; and, moreover, the address of another epistle, alleged to have been by the Clement of Phil. 4:3, who did in fact become bishop of Rome, to have been "to James, the lord and bishop of bishops, ruling both the holy church of the Hebrews at Jerusalem, and those everywhere by God's providence duly established."<sup>1</sup> In spite of the early date of this writer, such representations only provoke a smile; and they do this too, notwithstanding the presiding by James both over the see where Christianity started, and over the council there held, where Peter was present. And yet, how quickly the imaginary testimony of the ancient writer would have been seized upon to bolster up the

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decree to be that of Nice. These able and wary bishops, amazed, at once procured from the East all the Nicene decrees, disclosing thereby the cheat. Answering Boniface (418-422), the successor of Zosimus, they hoped to have no further cause to complain of the pride and arrogance of Rome. Nevertheless, Leo I. (440-461), "the great" advancer of Roman pretensions, in more than one case reported the imposture! J. C. Robertson, *Hist. of the Chris. Church*, 284, 285, 440. In these things we are reminded of St. Paul's solemn warning to all whose "energy of error" lays them open to believe any lie (1 Th. 2:3-12); and of whom, of course, the lying spirit makes an easy prey. "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." Matt. 7:20.

<sup>1</sup> Gieseler, I., § 58.

claims of Rome, if the address had been to Peter by James and Clement respectively. When however the ancient Roman demonstrates in other parts of his work his profound respect for Peter, even calling him the founder of the Roman see, and also for Clement, whom he declares to have been the immediate successor of the apostle therein, and even represents his own work as the teaching of Peter through Clement, although we may question his accuracy in respect of events over a century old, still, we must recognise, that he would neither have been inclined, nor would have dared to ignore any special claims pertaining to them or to his native see, which were commonly admitted in his own time. The attempt would only have exposed him to obloquy and ridicule, and would have been decidedly detrimental to the purpose of his work. That he says nothing therefore of any such special claims, and even represents the bishop of Rome as himself acknowledging the universal supremacy of the church to be in James, the apostle who had filled the office of bishop of Jerusalem, is very positive testimony against the existence of such supremacy in the Roman see at that period. The example further proves, in what is said of James, how little we can depend on writers of the early ages, and how carefully we must separate the gold from the dross; only feeling ourselves on solid ground when seeking for truth in the holy word of God.

24. At all events, for one born, educated, and living in Rome, toward the latter part of the second century, the very nature of whose work required him to claim all for Peter that he could, because of the pretence of the false teaching therein being that of the apostle;—for such a one to have put into the mouths of Peter himself and his alleged successor an acknowledgment that the lordship over the whole church was in another apostle, elsewhere located; while he said nothing whatever of any such supremacy being in themselves, or any claim of a papal character; and yet, to have greatly honoured them, pursuant to the demand of his work;—all this is certainly sufficient, especially in view of the life-long, daily familiarity of the author with the church in his native city, to demonstrate that in his day its papal pretensions had not arisen. I cannot understand how an honest, unprejudiced, well-informed person could assert otherwise. Rather, with such minds, I may have to meet the criticism, that it is puerile to be industriously proving such well-known facts. Be it so. But let it be remembered, that in challenging the deductions which have been drawn from our LORD's address to Peter, (who was only the spokesman of the apostolic band, and the receiver for the whole world of the promise of eternal Life in heaven, and of the warning of exact judgment according to deeds,) I am not writing merely for the well informed,

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but also for those who do not realise, and who sorely need, the stimulus that would be gained for each one personally by an accurate interpretation of the address, and by the consequent knowledge of the stirring nature of its great promise and solemn warning, and who do not know the facts above given. Nevertheless, not to try the patience of the former class, or weary the latter, I omit further drafts from the great mass of similar evidence. What has been given is certainly enough for the uneducated, or for those who have given little or no attention to early Christian writers, although, it may be, too much for scholars in divinity. At any rate, it should serve to remind both classes of their God-given liberty, with its accompanying inseparable accountability to the great Giver only, and especially in relation to the interpretation of scripture; as also was taught by St. Peter; and that in spiritual matters we should call no man an authoritative master, or teacher, or father;—that is to say, so as to make what men teach obligatory upon the conscience, in opposition to a man's own judgment, however much we may venerate them in all these capacities, whenever they guide ourselves or others to a nobler and truer life. But the special object here, in the evidence above adduced, is to show the ignorance of papal pretensions even in the Western Church (to whose writers only attention has been purposely confined) as late as the year 434, the date of Vincent's treatise; and to point out the inevitable conclusion against the existence of those pretensions during the entire period, and against their legitimacy at any time. The period of the existence, in general, of this ignorance might have been, for confirmatory purposes, still further extended; but for no other reason. Because the proving of such ignorance in the days of St. Peter and of the other apostles, and in the times nearest to them, is more to the purpose than anything that could have occurred in the centuries thereafter;—in fact, demonstrates the pretensions which arose in later centuries to be additions to, or subtractions from, the faith once delivered to the saints.<sup>1</sup> That these pretensions are contradictory to the words of inspiration, and to the spirit of fraternity, and equality, and liberty pervading the Gospel of Christ, is of itself destructive of the attempt to make them appear as developments of that faith.

25. Because, indeed, they are so well known to be such additions or subtractions, and one is able to put the finger upon the time when they were severally successfully asserted, Roman theologians have been forced to try and gloss them over as "developments" of the Christian faith; that is, that they have sprung naturally therefrom, or are the result of evolution. This, by the way, was after the

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<sup>1</sup> Jude 3.

more intelligent and single-hearted of them had realised how fatuous was the idea of any secret deposit of truth being handed down from the apostles through the bishops;<sup>1</sup> that is to say, after the fatuity was only preached and written about by those whose extreme partisan zeal had dulled their mental perceptions or who were unscrupulous enough to attempt an imposition upon the ignorant, the susceptible, and such as were open to the reception of whatever was fanciful and mysterious. Such a barefaced assumption (as it is in fact) shows how hard pressed Rome has been to defend her novelties in the face of the command neither to add to nor take from that which is written.<sup>2</sup> How ridiculous was this first resort of hers, in view of the bitter controversies between the early bishops themselves, without a single appeal from any one of them to this alleged secret source of accurate knowledge! One can well imagine how the novelty of such an appeal, if made, would have excited the wonder and derision of the opposing bishop or bishops! and how, verily, at once, it would have been met, after the fashion of an *argumentum ad hominem*, by appeals of like character, derisively made, on the other side of the question! But is the substituted theory of "development" any less a bald assumption? Is it not clearly a second, and, it is to be hoped, a last resort of helplessness against the attacks of enlightened reason? And do not the anxious efforts to get under such a subsequently sewed together apron of fig leaves, for lack of satisfactory covering, only expose the more what is a ridiculous and miserable plight? From what seed, doctrine, or principle of the Christian faith did these novelties severally develop; and by what process? And how comes it that such devices as the immaculate conception of the Virgin and the infallibility of the pope, both of them ascribing to human beings

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<sup>1</sup> To remedy the lack of "antiquity" (and, I may add, of "consent" and "universality") in the novelties of Rome "resort has been had, first to the supposition of a *disciplina arcani*, by which Romish tenets must have been held . . . in studious concealment, to come out only one by one through the course of the following centuries of distraction and decline both secular and ecclesiastical; and then, that failing, more recently to the theory of an assumed *development*, by which the deposit once committed to the Church (the author means, *bishops*) may enlarge itself and branch forth into new doctrines and practice, with progress of years and in the advancement of society."—*Translator's Preface to Vincent.*

<sup>2</sup> Deut. 4: 2; 12: 32. Josh. 1: 7; 11: 15. Prov. 30: 5, 6. Matt. 15: 3-9. Is. 29: 10-14. Col. 2: 6-8, 16-22. Tit. 1: 14. Rev. 22: 17-20.



that which pertains to a superhuman nature only, took over nineteen hundred years for their ultimate production? Was it because they are so utterly opposed to the free spirit and teaching of the scriptures? It can hardly be denied that this is the natural inference; and accordingly such long delayed novelties require the greater and more certain proof for their due authentication. Unless their character as logical and necessary developments of the faith of the gospel can be well established, and in thorough conformity therewith, they should be regarded as irreverent and presumptuous additions thereto. Apart from such certain proof, and from also a positive showing forth of the necessity and reasonableness of the novelties, their natural tendency would seem to be, rather, in harmony with the destructive designs of Satan, and not at all with the inspired teaching and elevating purpose of the Word of God.

26. While I would like to say somewhat of both these latest novelties of Rome, my subject confines me to the latest of all. More even than in respect of other dogmas, it is in the delay in the formal promulgation of the infallibility of the pope that we have an especially strong argument against its truth. For we may well ask why, if the infallibility of a living interpreter were needful, or even beneficial to men, the prolonged period of over nineteen centuries was suffered to elapse before an authorised announcement thereof was made, and particularly, seeing that the dogma manifestly implies (contrary, however, to the inspired word) that orthodoxy, correct teaching, is more worthy of consideration than the working out by the individual of his own salvation with all fear and trembling; or that a state of parasitical dependence upon another is better than to be the freeman of the LORD, as in so many ways is commanded in holy writ. Even if the strange contention were true, and the commandments of GOD should not be in harmony in this matter, are we to conclude that the formal announcement of this alleged accessible source of infallible teaching and interpretation was deferred, because after July 18, 1870, souls became more valuable to GOD than before; although so long before Jesus died to save all men alike? Why, of all things, should we now-a-days be favoured above those who in days of bitter persecution proved their unselfish devotion to the faith even unto death, enduring the most dreadful bodily agonies; and who at the same time contended zealously and earnestly with one another for the truth of the gospel, studying anxiously and with painstaking care the word of GOD for its divine illumination and the avoidance of error; not knowing that they had at hand in this lately asserted infallibility of the bishop of Rome a sure and easy way of settling their doubts and controversies;—nay, rather, often contending with Rome itself for what they believed to be true. Taking St. Peter at his word, as set forth in



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his second epistle, and relying upon like teaching in the other scriptures, they conceived the word of God to be the "sure word of prophecy," and that they were directly commanded to give it heed, and were assured therein that its interpretation was not private or exclusive, but open and common to all. We can understand, indeed, how in due time, or not until the time appointed, Christ died for all men; seeing that by anticipation His work from the beginning was effective for all mankind; and that, in addition, a long course of antecedent training and prophetic testimony and teaching was needed to make ready the way of the LORD,<sup>1</sup> and to furnish supernatural proof for all time of the verity of His divine mission and of what it was to accomplish. And we can understand also, why, after His coming, the history of the great event, and of the important matters pertaining thereto, or connected therewith, together with the several momentous revelations accompanying the same, should have been fully given to men, and duly authenticated by living witnesses as coming forth from those who were "moved by the Holy Spirit" to tell about them; so that as St. Peter himself declares in regard to his own testimony, we may, after his decease, in a permanent written form, "have these things always in remembrance,"<sup>2</sup> or not be compelled to rely upon the unsteady voice of a changeful church, and its man-made, repeatedly added novelties, and its varying successions of changeful teachers and preachers. Evidently therefore St. Peter did not recognise that there would be after him any line of infallible popes, but on the contrary took the precaution of guarding against the errors of all who should come after him, whoever they might be.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. 3:4. Luke 1:76; 24:25-27. John 1:23. Is. 40:3.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Pet. 1:12-21. See also Luke 1:1-4. Acts 1:1-3.

<sup>3</sup> While the council which promulgated the pope's infallibility was being held, an intelligent papist, in evident touch with ecclesiastical opinion in his church in this country, assured me with emphasis that the doctrine was never that of Rome, and would never be promulgated by the council. When, however, soon after, the promulgation occurred, with apparent forgetfulness, he just as strongly averred, that the church had always held the doctrine. And this, although history tells, how after centuries it arose, was resisted for centuries more, and was finally promulgated as late as 1870! Many years before this, at a consecration in a R. C. cathedral (in Mott St., New York) of a bishop for Buffalo, a bishop preached, with special reference to the pope, of equality in the episcopate, very like the teaching of Cyprian of old; such as no Roman ecclesiastic would dare now to preach. In fine, the dogma of papal infallibility was accepted, as the history of the council

27. And among the things which inspired men have put into this permanent, written form, we can understand also, in particular, when at length Life and Immortality had been brought to light for all, why, thereupon, lest those who are to live for ever should mistake the nature and extent of the Work of Christ, (as in fact the many do,) all should be warned, over and over again, of the ever present judgment upon them of the GOD of unchangeable justice, and of its administration by the very One who rescued them from Death; and that, because of the eternal, unchangeable, and perfectly discriminating justice of the judgment, it is upon each newly created being throughout his unending existence, not by any means merely according to his orthodoxy, nor even, in any isolated sense, his faith, but according to all his deeds, whether good or evil. <sup>1</sup> With eternity before the individual, it therefore became all-important that he should be admonished by revelation upon revelation, as well as by the facts of nature,<sup>2</sup> notwithstanding what men may say about faith, or absolution, or other supposed substitute for holy deeds, how inevitable for ever and ever are the sufferings of a judgment always at hand upon sinfulness; that reformatory judgment is its invariable and necessary concomitant; and because

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itself shows, by a considerable minority of Romanists against their own judgment; or not because they believed therein, but in the infallibility of the council.

<sup>1</sup> As a rule, orthodoxy and heterodoxy are respectively results of birth and environment, rather than of the works of the man. That is to say, neither of them, in general, is a matter of merit or demerit, to be rewarded or punished by a judgment which is strictly according to deeds. But where there is in the matter a putting forth or abstaining from watchfulness, industry, an idle dependence "upon the precepts of man," and the like, judgment then logically follows according to the deed. Hence the necessity of effort both to think and do aright is patent, and is obligatory upon every man; and particularly, seeing that, doubtless for the very purpose of arousing this effort, the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children. Accordingly, neither the Church, nor the pope, nor any bishop or priest, nor any idle trust in Jesus, can give a man a way of escape from this duty, or from any judgment whatever. The elder church of Israel, as a national church, had its head. And yet, if an individual suffered himself to be misled by this head, it did not avert his judgment. We read: "And the LORD plagued the people, because they made the calf which Aaron made." Ex. 32: 35.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. 1: 18-20, 28, 32; 2: 1-6. Acts 17: 28-31.

it is thus unpardonable, that, except by deeds which in very truth reform the character, the divine chastisements can in no way be averted; not even though the evil deeds themselves be pardoned: since, on the one hand, the pure, just, and merciful Ruler of the universe will not suffer His creatures to remain imperfect, especially after having redeemed them by reason of His unceasing love, nor, on the other, will He interfere with the freedom of their will, which, like all His gifts, He will not recall. Such things as these, we can well understand, should be fully brought to light only in their proper season; although even these were in a prefatory way duly commented upon in inspiration long before, and the manifestation of the judgments of the just God in the world were understood of all men from the beginning. But if, in addition, it were necessary that men should be provided with an infallible living teacher, notwithstanding the parasitic, degrading tendencies of such a position,—a provision intimating in fact, that what they believed in the several matters of theological controversy among Christians was more important than what they did,—then the long delay in the most authentic promulgation of the alleged fact, or in making known in an unquestionable manner to the world from the beginning, that GOD although in utter inconsistency with His usual method of dealing with His free-will creatures, had appointed an easy, infallible way of escape from error, hardly comports with that mercy which endureth for ever,—existing as well before July 18, 1870, when to so many, the pope for the first time became infallible, as after that day. What momentous controversies a knowledge thereof from the first would have spared the early Christians! nay, what bitterness; what unseemly divisions! If true, why did not they—in truth, why did not the first bishops of Rome themselves—know of it; and all make their appeals thereto, all along, during the first Christian centuries? Why afterwards did it have to begin to be considered, and take so long to grow into acceptance? What watchfulness, care, and diligence in the past, as in the present, might have been saved! How much troubled thought and painful study ignorance of the doctrine has caused! How many anxious doubts would have been resolved! Why, oh, why, if it really be the truth as revealed, such unaccountable delay? Was it because it was not the will of God at any time, in the past or in the future, to make of the Christian world a stagnant pool? And is the delay therefore of His designing; or one which was created by the inability of men to bring their ambitious designs to a speedier fruition? For the true revelation of GOD is to have His children freemen, and not slaves. And instead of having them thoughtless and dependent upon others, He would stir them up to become men of character; able, if need be, to resist the mis-

leading of an archangel; that there may be no renewal of the fall from heaven. And because the good Father in Heaven is jealous for the welfare of His children, therefore it is that He would have none upon earth exercise a paternal spiritual lordship over their judgment, and expressly commands them to call none here below their father, teacher, or spiritual master. In giving them ears to hear, and therewith an independent, individual judgment, and in telling them also to take heed what they hear, He shows most emphatically that His gifts must be independently used by the individual possessor, and that no man must accept without question, or contrary to his own judgment, the dictates of another, or of any number of others. He must examine for himself whether he be in the faith. As for those who have had the dictates of others ingrained into their being from childhood, never exerting their own faculties about them, such wholly dependent beings have not used their free will and their judgment, if use it be, even so much as a bare acceptance would imply. In either case, for that matter, whether it be an acceptance or not, it is one of responsible gifts now lying dormant, and exposed to the just judgment of the Giver.

[NOTE.—Owing to the sudden death of the author this note was unfinished. But it has been thought best to give it to the reader just as he left it.]

§ 100 (a.), (p.199). MEANING OF "PRIVATE" IN 2 Pet. 1: 20.—The word in 2 Pet. 1: 20 translated "private," when used in that sense, is uniformly employed by the Greek authors in opposition to that which is public and common; and the examples are multitudinous. A few from the works of Xenophon will suffice for illustration, to wit: Inst. 1. 2. 4, "decide all controversies both public and *private*"; 6. 2. 34, "for these things are useful to every *private* person and also to the public." *Hell.* 1. 2. 10, "the highest rewards both in public and *private*"; 1. 7. 18, "In consequence, they are now involved in a common accusation, where others were *separately* at fault." *Hiero.* 10. 5, "alike to your *private* possessions, and to those throughout the country"; 11. 1, "to spend of his *private* resources for the common good. For to me at least it appears, that what a king lays out for the state serves a more useful purpose than what is expended upon his *private* person." Mem. 3. 7. 4, 5, "But it is not the same thing, Socrates, to be conversing in *private* and to be pleading before a multitude. . . . And yet, seest thou not," said he, "how the bashfulness and timidity implanted in men are greater by far before crowds, than is the case in *private* conferences?" 3. 11. 16, "many affairs *private* and public furnish me employment." *De Vec.* 4. 21, "how can one detect the public money (*i. e.*, that belonging

to the state), when carried off; that which is *private* being just like it?"

In the N. T., under different renderings, the same opposition is continually shown; as in those examples where Jesus retires *apart* from the multitude. And again as follows: Heb. 7: 27, "first for *His own* sins, and then for the people's." 1 Tim. 3: 5, "For if a man know not how to rule *his own* house, how shall he take care of a congregation of GOD?"

When accordingly 2 Pet. 1: 20 denies the interpretation of prophecy to be a private right, it strictly affirms it to be a public and common right, or the right of the people; thus placing the passage in full accord with other texts of scripture; for example, with the declaration of Moses at the beginning, that "those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever." Those who so pervert the passage as even directly to reverse its meaning display either ignorance or something worse. See the Lexicon of L. and S. (*idios*).

As elsewhere stated, I regard the passage, however, (particularly in view of the context,) as stating, not merely interpretation to be a public and common right, but also not to be limited to one meaning only; and accordingly I regard it as affirming prophecy to be of no *exclusive* interpretation; the term "exclusive" applying to both ideas.

§ 124 (a), (p. 253). THE GREEK PREPOSITION *eis*.—"Elect . . . by sanctification of spirit *through* (*eis*) Jesus Christ's obedience and sprinkling of blood." <sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, justified, "according to the foreknowledge of GOD (the) Father." For corresponding or kindred senses of the preposition *eis* a few examples from the N. T. may be given, as follows: Acts 7: 53, "received the law *by* (or, *through*) the ordinances of messengers"—to wit, the prophets sent from GOD. 2 Th. 1: 11, "Wherefore" (or, *because of* which). So 2: 14. 1 Tim. 2: 7 (not "Whereunto." See context), 4: 10. 2 Tim. 1: 11 (*cf.* next verse—"for which cause also," or, "because of which also"); <sup>2</sup> Heb. 11: 3 ("so that," or, "*by reason of* which"). 1 Pet. 4: 6, "For *for* this cause" (a.v.), or, "For *because of* this"; *i. e.*, the judgment upon the quick and the dead alike. "For *therefore*," says the apostle, "was the Gospel preached also to the dead," or the good news which should lead them to "live like GOD in spirit." 1 John

<sup>1</sup> A strictly literal translation; there being no articles in the Greek.

<sup>2</sup> In this verse (12) the translation is not of *eis*, but of *dia*,—*i. e.*, as an equivalent in a causal point of view to the *eis* of verse 11.



3:8. Here too the preposition is consequential. First we are told, that the sinner is of the devil, who sinneth from the beginning. "Therefore," it is said, or "*Because of* this was the Son of GOD manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil." Matt. 14:31, "*wherefore* (or, *because of* what, or *for* what *reason*) didst thou doubt?" 12:41, and Luke 11:32, "*repented at* (*because of*) the preaching of Jonas." Rom. 4:20, "*But at* (*by reason of, in consequence of, because of*) the promise of GOD he faltered not through unbelief." 2 Cor. 8:6, "*Insomuch that*" (*on this account, because of* this, *for this reason*).

*Eis* in 1 Pet. 1:2 is also illustrated by the countless examples where it indicates intent, purpose or end; for this idea is implied in an election according to GOD'S foreknowledge *through, or in view of, or in respect of, or by virtue of*, the Life and Death of Jesus Christ.

§ 124 (b), (p. 255). DUALISTIC AND TRIADIC CONCEPTION OF MAN.—I. Both our inner consciousness and outward observation recognise within us two different and differently derived natures; to wit, a good nature, which must have been derived from the great Source of all good, and an evil nature, which must have had an evil origin.<sup>1</sup> In the varied nomenclature of the Bible, among other descriptive appellations the former nature is called the child of GOD, and also the spiritual, or inner, or hidden, or new man, and the latter the child of the devil, and also the natural, or carnal, or outward, or old man. And, most consistently, the Child of GOD in each man is declared to be incorruptible and imperishable or immortal, and continually to receive new Life from his Eternal Parent; and the child of the devil to be corruptible, and doomed eventually to perish. Furthermore, in this duality within each man there is also a trinity, as evidenced by our three separate, independent wills; namely, the will of the flesh, of the mind, and of the spirit. So distinct are they, that at the same time the will of the flesh may be to eat or sleep, of the intellect to read or engage in other intellectual work, and of the spirit to do a deed of piety or charity or useful labour. And whenever these wills are bent upon their several ways, it becomes a question of mastery between them.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 1 John 2:29; 3:8, 10, 14, 18, 19, 24; 4:7-14. Rom. 8:14-16. John 8:37-44, 47. Jas. 1:13-18. 1 Cor. 2:12-15.

<sup>2</sup> "But the GOD of peace Himself hath sanctified you wholly (the past tense, because the new man hath already been created in Christ, 2 Cor. 5:15-18); and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved perfect, without blame (or, preserved entirely without blame), in the presence (within us) of our LORD Jesus Christ."

And yet all three are of the one man. Nay, each nature with its own three wills makes of every individual a double trinity; that is to say, a triune good personality, and a triune evil similitude; just as the tares in the parable ape the wheat.<sup>1</sup> And both these triune personalities together constitute one conscious personal identity, even a unity of being. Moreover, the warring triune wills are the visible experience of this earthly plane. Is it any wonder, when we come to heavenly things, about which no one is wiser than that which is revealed, that we should be told of the three harmonious wills of the one God above, in view of the three inharmonious wills of each man below? In man indeed, there seems to be a third trinity of contradictory personalities made by the two natures and their possessor; thus making of man a trinity of trinities!<sup>2</sup>

In the parable of the wheat and the tares we have from our LORD Himself, as also in other places, the teaching that all men are children of God and at the same time children of the devil. For in that parable the metaphor of "the field" is interpreted by Him to signify "the world"; and it is in the same world in which the wheat is sown, that the devil sows the tares; while also the wheat is called by Him "the children of the kingdom," and the tares "the children of the wicked (one)." And, in keeping with the gift to man of sovereignty of will, both are suffered to remain together until the harvest. Then, when the wheat is fully ripe, the tares bundle after bundle having been all gathered and consumed in the fires of æonic judgment, and the wheat wholly delivered from their baneful presence after the long battle of survivorship between them, the wheat shall be gathered into the barn. "So," says our LORD, "shall it be at the end (or consummation) of this æon"; thus seeming to make the parable a picture of progress from æon to æon, as well as of final perfection. It would be woe to us, if the continuance of the gathering out of His kingdom of all things that offend should apply only to this Life, and to our imperfect condition at its close.

2. The two distinct, opposing existences in each man are set

<sup>1</sup> Th. 5:23. See Luke 10:27. Heb. 4:12. Rom. 1:18; 2:9-13; 3:9-20.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43.

<sup>2</sup> The Incarnation and re-creation thereby are necessarily beyond the human understanding; for they concern the nature and possibilities of the Infinite God, and are outside the limits of finite conception. For our knowledge of supernatural things, of course, we are dependent upon and concluded by that which may be revealed from a supernatural source. In view of the triune nature of man himself, how idle is his conceit of piercing the skies, and of thus determining, contrary to revelation, that God is not triune!

forth at length by St. Paul, as follows: "For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For what I perform<sup>1</sup> I know not: for not what I would, that I practise; but what I hate, that I do. But if what I would not, that I do, I consent unto the law that it is good. But now it is no more I<sup>2</sup> that perform it, but the sinfulness that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing:<sup>3</sup> for to will is present with me; but to perform that which is good (is) not. For the good which I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I practise. But if what I would not, that I do, it is no more I that perform it, but the sinfulness that dwelleth in me. I find then the law, to me that would do the good, that to me<sup>4</sup> the evil is present. For I delight in the law of GOD after the inward man: but I see another<sup>5</sup> law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sinfulness which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of Death? I thank GOD! (for it shall be) through Jesus Christ our LORD. So then in my mind I myself<sup>6</sup> serve the law of GOD; but in the flesh the law of sinfulness.

<sup>1</sup> In Rom. 7: 15, etc., probably for the sake of variety, are there different Greek verbs, which I distinguish as *perform*, *practise* (r. v.), and *do*; but I cannot detect any difference of significance in them; and I do not believe in altering the a. v., where nothing is gained. In order to arrest attention by going out of the beaten track, a writer may do this; but a regular version, like the r. v., should not.

<sup>2</sup> Those personal pronouns which are usually omitted in Greek become emphatic, when, as here, expressed. It is not I, the son of GOD, that do the evil, but I, the son of the devil.

<sup>3</sup> How carefully and often we are told that the child of evil has no good in him, or is totally depraved, while the child of GOD cannot sin.

<sup>4</sup> The r. v. omits "to me"; failing to realise here the dual personality of which the sacred writer is continuing consistently to speak; and that its repetition is in exact conformity with the repetition of the "I" all along, and has the same idea in view. "I find then the law to me (the child of GOD) that would do the good, that to me (the child of the devil) the evil is present."

<sup>5</sup> Here the possessor of the two natures has his personal identity distinguished from those natures, showing the complete preservation of his sovereign free will to assert either nature at the expense of the other.

<sup>6</sup> See note (5) above, of this ¶., and the emphasis put upon the personal identity of the child of GOD.

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.<sup>1</sup> For the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of Sinfulness and Death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, GOD, sending His own Son in likeness of sinful flesh,<sup>2</sup> and for (or, on account of) sinfulness, condemned the sinfulness in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law should be fulfilled in us, who exist not<sup>3</sup> as flesh, but as spirit. For they that are as flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are as spirit the things of the spirit. For the mind of the flesh is Death; but the mind of the spirit is Life and Peace. Because the mind of the flesh is enmity against GOD: for it is not subject to the law of GOD, neither indeed can it be: and they that are in the flesh cannot please GOD.<sup>4</sup> But ye are not in flesh, but in spirit, if so be that the Spirit of GOD dwelleth in you. And if any have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. And if Christ is in you, the body (*i. e.*, the flesh, or evil nature) is dead because of sinfulness; but the spirit is Life because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies<sup>5</sup> through His Spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live as flesh. For if ye live as flesh, ye would die: but if in spirit ye put to death the doings of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of GOD, these are sons of GOD. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of sonship, wherefore we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of GOD: and if children, then heirs; heirs of GOD, and joint-heirs of Christ;<sup>6</sup> if so be that we suffer together, that we may be also glorified together." Rom. 7: 14-25; 8: 1-17. In this passage one of the two natures is rep-

<sup>1</sup> And accordingly as sons of God we are immortal.

<sup>2</sup> In § 37, etc. I translate *hamartia* "sin" and accordingly this phrase "sin's flesh." In changing from "sin" to the better rendering "sinfulness," we would have here literally "in likeness of flesh of sinfulness."

<sup>3</sup> See § 37, footnote, also verse 10 below.

<sup>4</sup> See note (3), page 373, of this ¶.

<sup>5</sup> Just above, and in 7: 24 and 8: 13, the term "body" represented the carnal nature or "old man"; but here it is the body of flesh in which we are dwelling; which, for distinction, is called the "mortal body."

<sup>6</sup> Or, "Christ's joint-heirs"—*i. e.*, made so by Christ; not, "joint-heirs with Christ." See the Greek.

resented to be without sin, and the other to be utterly sinful, and a "body of Death." In the end the former is said to be delivered from the other, or freed from Sinfulness and Death; the sinless nature abiding for ever, and the other receiving its proper end. In this the thoughtful mind may learn how it is that all sinners (that is, all men) are to suffer in æonic fire, and be finally destroyed; and, notwithstanding, that universal salvation is promised. And such a mind will have further reason to know, how we are all guilty in our *ego*—St. Paul's "I" that is incapable of good—of the Unpardonable Sin, even the "Sin unto Death"; and that our destruction in that *ego* is a necessary part of the Gospel of our Salvation. And even now from the old curse of Death we are freed. "For the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ (by reason of my new Life already given) hath made me free from the law of Sin and Death." Thus each nature constitutes in itself our *ego*, or personal identity, and the acts of each nature are truly our own, and what is true of either nature of a man is true of the man. Thus St. Paul does not make of a man a simple unity acted upon by the forces of good and evil; but these forces belong respectively to the two warring existences in the man's inner being, making with the man himself a veritable trinity.

3. St. John also thus writes of the two natures: "If ye know that He is righteous, ye know that also every one that doeth righteousness has been begotten of Him. Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called, and are, children of God! Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not. Beloved, now are we children of God. . . . Whosoever<sup>1</sup> abideth in Him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him. Little children, let no man lead you astray: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous.<sup>2</sup> He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this reason the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.<sup>3</sup> Who-

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<sup>1</sup> "Whosoever" translates, wherever it occurs, the Greek for "every one that."

<sup>2</sup> A righteous man, being like God, just as a son takes after the nature of his father, proves by his righteousness that a divine nature is in him. The image testifies that God is his father. So an act of sin proves in like manner the evil nature in the sinner, and its source. "He that committeth sin is of the devil."

<sup>3</sup> But He was not manifested to destroy mankind, but to beget in them the divine Life, and so enable them to overcome the evil life in them, and put it to death, without infringing in the least upon their free will.



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soever has been begotten of God doth not commit sin; for his seed abideth in him: and he cannot sin, because he has been begotten of God. In this are manifested the children of God and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. For this is the message which ye have heard from the beginning, that ye should love one another: not (be), as Cain was, of the evil (one), and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his works were evil, and those of his brother righteous. Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. We know that we have passed from Death into Life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not abideth in Death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer, and ye know that no murderer hath eternal Life abiding in him. . . . Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world. They are of the world . . . We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he who is not of God heareth us not. Hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.<sup>1</sup> Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth has been begotten of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God: for God is love." The apostle next tells, how God had shown His love for men, when not loving Him, by sending His "Son into the world, that we should<sup>2</sup> live through Him"; and exhorts us in return to love one another. He then proceeds: "No man hath seen God at any time: (that is, to have direct proof of our divine birth: but we have the proof, if we manifest divine characteristics; for) if we love one another, God abideth in us, and His love hath been developed in us.<sup>3</sup> By this we know that we

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<sup>1</sup> In 4: 3 it is the spirit of antichrist, which was to come in some special sense, and yet in a general sense was already in the world. See, too, 2: 18. In the general sense it is the "old man" within us all.

<sup>2</sup> Consistently with the hopeless views of translators in respect of the greater number of mankind, we have "might," inferring a mere possibility, as the auxiliary selected throughout the versions, where with more hopeful views the rendering would be "should," to denote a certainty. Except where it escapes my attention, I change the "might" to "should," in translating.

<sup>3</sup> Or, reproduced; the prominent thought of the passage being at this point that God's abiding in us and our sonship to Him are shown by our exhibiting that which pertains to God, viz., love. "If we love one another God abideth in us, and (it is) His love (that) is done by us." But for the "it is" and the "that," this, in fact, would be a literal rendering; and as these expressions are often required by English idiom, we may regard the rendering as

abide in Him, and He in us, in that He hath given us of His Spirit. And we (*i. e.*, we who were personally with Jesus)<sup>1</sup> have seen and do testify that the Father hath sent the Son (to be) the Saviour of the world. . . . If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater. . . . And this is the testimony, that God hath given us eternal Life, and this Life is His Son. He that hath the Son hath the Life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not the Life." In other words, the nature wherein dwelleth Christ, "the hope of glory," hath eternal Life; and the evil nature hath it not. 1 John 2: 29; 3: 1, 2, 6-15; 4: 4-9, 12-14; 5: 9, 11, 12. We thus read that we are children of God, and cannot sin; and that whosoever sinneth is of the devil. And this was said after the propitiation "for the whole world," previously mentioned,<sup>2</sup> had been made; while at the beginning of the epistle we read: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." 1 John 1: 8. Of course all this would be inconsistent, if there were not within us two opposing, independent existences, or *egoes*, as told of by St. Paul. But so self-deceived are we, that in the face of the universality of sin, some of us often use language indicating that the evil nature had vanished, not in anticipation, as the Bible sometimes does, or in a fundamental sense, but as a positive fact; while most of us divide men into two separate classes, the one part, including ourselves, being children of God, and the rest, even the great majority, children of the devil. In general,—and it is quite natural,—we are not at all prone to acknowledge the shame of having the devil for a father, and that we have a devilish nature derived from him. With like pride, where a little humility in recognizing a degrading fact would have been wholesome, were the members of the elder church, when told by our Lord of their being children of the devil, exceedingly vociferous in their protestations

strictly literal. The objection is, that in English we do not speak of "doing love." The normal meanings of the verb are: *to bring to an end, accomplish, execute, do, perform, finish, complete, consummate, fulfil, perfect* (the rendering of the versions); and so, *to mature, and the like*. It also means, *to consecrate* (*i. e.*, *to make one perfect for the discharge of his office*). Hdt. 1. 121, containing the corresponding adjective, is rendered by L. and S. "a vision which *imported* nothing." Our love *imports* here that God's love is acting in us. The idea of the versions that God's love becomes perfected seems irreverent.

<sup>1</sup> "We" in the Greek is several times expressed to emphasise and contrast;—here to contrast the persons to whom it applies with those to whom it previously referred, or with us all.

<sup>2</sup> 1 John 2: 2.

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to the contrary, haughtily claiming to be children of Abraham and of GOD.<sup>1</sup>

4. A realization of the two natures within us often gives a better understanding of Scripture, and reconciles passages which would otherwise seem in conflict. Indeed, the very statements that men are both children of God and children of the devil, and are at the same time from above and from below, and that they are sinners, but, being children of God, cannot sin at all, are, apart from the duality in each man, manifest contradictions; for it is impossible, in the various positive assertions made of the two natures and of their opposite characteristics and destinies, to regard them as mere figures of speech, or as said of distinct portions of men. It is certainly no figure of speech, nor does it pertain only to a portion of men, to say that all are sinners, or to call sinners children of God; and if all are sinners, and all or any of them children of God, to declare that they cannot sin, because they are born of God; or, on the other hand, being sons of God, that they can do no good works, have no good in them, and can neither hear nor understand the word of truth. And yet, just such statements, and others also of equal apparent inconsistency, we have had, and more will be cited; and they are constantly being made in the Word of God. Still, they are easily harmonised, if we keep in mind that there are two differently derived, utterly opposite natures in us; but not otherwise. In fact, the supernatural harmony of the several sacred writers in the matter should be specially noticed; and, too, how they press the subject upon our attention. For how spiritually energising would be the fear of God and the trembling

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<sup>1</sup> The Rev. Charles Kingsley, in a sermon on "Human Nature," tells of a man in America, who, when rebuked for drunkenness, said, "There is a great deal of human nature in a man." The preacher thereupon remonstrates at the slur upon human nature; adding, "as if the devil, and not God, had made human nature, and as if Christ had not redeemed human nature." All which is true, indeed, of man, and the gift to him of a nature wherein he has been made a child of God. But how about the tares from an evil source, which have been sown among the wheat in the field of the world? The preacher overlooked the very nature to put down which he was preaching;—a nature, however, recognised in every command, exhortation and rebuke of the Bible. It was my great pleasure, after writing *The Purpose of the Æons*, to find in Canon Kingsley so able an advocate of certain important teaching therein insisted upon. I wonder therefore that he had nothing to say about the great deal of evil human nature there is, alas! in us all. *The Good News of God*, Sermon xxiii, p. 188.

before Him, save in those in whom the worldly nature is dominant, to realise on the one hand, that so long as we possess the one nature, we are under His æonic condemnation, and are necessitated to put forth our personal efforts with vigour, to effect our riddance therefrom, and to cause the evil nature to be brought to the everlasting destruction which is its foreordained doom; and on the other hand, to feel assured, that as children of GOD we have eternal Life, and are heirs of its future unalloyed enjoyment, and that during the period of æonic judgment there is given us this strong "æonic consolation and good hope through grace."<sup>1</sup> Based as this hope is upon the love of an unchangeable Father, and the immutability of His glorious purpose in our behalf, even graciously confirmed to us, as it is said, by His oath, it becomes to all earnest strivers after holiness, amid the troubles of life, and the fearful threatenings of the Bible, "as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast."<sup>2</sup> In further illustration of the fact that passages of scripture which seem confusing become not only intelligible, but reasonable, when the two natures are taken into consideration, may be mentioned the desultory proofs which St. John gives of our derivation, first, from God or, next, from an evil source. He proclaims, in the first place, every one that doeth righteousness to be begotten of God (1 John 2: 29); and then, but in a disconnected, irregular way, after the general statement, he declares of special acts of righteousness, that each one in itself proves the doer's<sup>s</sup> divine birth. That is to say, if he loveth GOD or his brother (3: 10-20; 4: 7-13, 16-21; 5: 1, 2), or is a hearer of the truth (4: 5, 6), or believeth in the Son of GOD (5: 10), or even confesseth Christ to have come in the flesh (4: 2, 3) or to be the Son of GOD (4: 15), or believeth Jesus to be the Christ (5: 1), or doeth any thing which is righteous (see *passim*), he becomes in so far a doer of righteousness, and is of GOD. On the other hand, if he fail in any such thing, therein he manifests himself to be not of GOD, but to possess a nature which is of different origin. Not that either way he is wholly good or wholly evil, but only that he has a nature corresponding with his good or evil acts. For that which is righteous must be from above, and that which is unrighteous from below.

5. And what one is there that does not do some act of righteousness, however little? For example, "as love is of GOD; and every one that loveth has been begotten of GOD," what one is there that is wholly destitute of love? Says Isaiah: "For Thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: Thou, O LORD, art our Father, our Redeemer; Thy name is from everlasting. . . . O LORD, Thou art our Father; we are

<sup>1</sup> 2 Th. 2: 16.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. 6: 17-19.

the clay, and Thou our Potter; and we all are the work of Thy hand." Is. 63:16; 64:8. Hence St. Paul, who so often tells of our being sons of GOD, addressed the Athenians, although they were idolaters and heathen, saying to them of GOD, that He is "not far from each one of us: for in Him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also His offspring." And with reference to the evidences of idolatry around the apostle while he was speaking, he added: "Being then the offspring of GOD, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and device of man." Acts 17:27-29. The sin of idolatry is not, of course, the act of a son of GOD; and it was therefore of men in their evil nature that these last words were said. And is there not reason to fear that for centuries a similar idolatry has been customary among Christians? Ought we to think that the Godhead is like unto bread or wine, which is made by the art and device of men? And are there no other objects of adoration devised by man, and graven or ornamented by his art, to which Christians even bend the knee in worship? It was, verily, in warning to the elder Church, and through that Church to us all, that Isaiah, the same whose utterances are so pronounced respecting the Fatherhood of GOD, thus wrote: "I am the LORD; that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images. . . . Thy first father sinned, and thy teachers (or, thine interpreters) have transgressed against Me (Is. 42:8; 43:27). Verily Thou art a God that hidest Thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour. . . . They have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image, and pray unto a god that cannot save. . . . Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else. By myself have I sworn, the word is gone forth from my mouth (in) righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. Only in Jehovah, shall one say, have I righteousness and strength: even to Him shall men come." 45:15, 20, 22-24. St. Paul expressly declares the tendency to magnify material things to spring from the fleshly nature. After directing that no one should judge Christians in respect to the ceremonies of the elder church, which were only a shadow of the things that should follow, while the body that casts the shadow is that of Christ; the apostle adds in regard to Him, "Let no designing person, by humility and a worshipping of the angels, as a judge deprive<sup>1</sup> you (herein), rashly intruding into things which he hath not seen, being

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<sup>1</sup> The verb signifies "deprive as a *brabeus*" (*i. e., umpire, arbiter, or judge*); thus conforming to the "judge" of v. 16).



as to nature<sup>1</sup> under the mind of the flesh; and not keeping hold of the Head, from which all the body, through the joints and bands, being abundantly nourished and knit together, should grow up (in) the growth of God. If ye died with Christ from the passing shadows<sup>2</sup> of the world, why, as though living in the world, do ye subject yourselves to ordinances . . . after the commandments and teachings of men." Col. 2: 18-20, 22. See 16, 17. Evidently St. Paul, especially in view of the warnings of Jesus,<sup>3</sup> was anxious lest, under the influence of the fleshly nature, which loves the world and its pomp and circumstance, men, on this or that religious pretext, should become the victims of numerous unwholesome traditions and ceremonial displays, and of the falsehoods embodied in them, and of pernicious teachings and commandments,—all of man's devising and subtlety; and should be deprived of the simplicity which pertains to the things of Christ, and in their extreme reverence for those of men, should weaken in reverence for their true and only spiritual Father, who is in Heaven. In all this we perceive that while all men are acknowledged to be of God, we all show continually, by our love of the things of the world, that we have another nature. As St. John says, after mentioning the "sin unto Death," "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in that evil." 1 John 5: 19.

6. In harmony with his fellow apostles St. James says: "Let no one, being tempted, say, I am tempted of God: for God is not to be tempted of evil things, and Himself tempteth no one. But every one is tempted when by his own lust drawn away and enticed. Then the lust having conceived beareth sin; and the sin having been committed<sup>4</sup> bringeth forth Death. Be not led astray, my

<sup>1</sup> The participle rendered "being as to nature" is, with its verb, formed on the noun *phusis*, meaning *nature*, or the word of which we are reminded in *physics*, *physical*, etc. The verb means also, figuratively, "*to puff up*," as rendered in the versions.

<sup>2</sup> The primary idea of the noun is *the moving shadow* of the index of the sun-dial. By derivation it means also *one of a series or row*; and so, in the plural, the *A, B, C*, the *rudiments*. Or again a *component part*; and so, in the plural, the *elements*.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. 6: 5-13; 7: 15-20; 12: 1-16; 15: 1-9; 23: 1, 26.

<sup>4</sup> Notice in English, as well as in the Greek, the reference back of the articles in this sentence.—"Having been committed" is translated by the a. v. "when it is finished"; by the r. v., "when it is full-grown,"—the latter a comparatively rare meaning. For the normal and ordinary meanings, see above, ¶ 3, note (3), pp. 376, 377. Both there and here the idea seems to be that of something conceived, generated, or produced. The a. v.'s rendering is true to the normal

beloved brethren. Every good gift (*dosis*) and every perfect gift (*dorema*)<sup>1</sup> is from above, coming down from the Father (*i. e.*, sole Source) of lights, with whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning. Of His own will He brought us forth by the Word of Truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits<sup>2</sup> of His creatures. . . . Wherefore putting away all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness, receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls." Jas. 1: 13-18, 21. The same apostle tells us also of two different kinds of wisdom, saying of the one, "This wisdom is not (that which) cometh down from above, but is earthly, of a natural sort, devilish." And of the other, "But the wisdom from above is first pure, then" etc., 3: 15, 17. And of that which in the first of the above passages is called the implanted word he

idea, but is awkward, obscure, and far away from the apostle's metaphor of something conceived or born. But how much more so is the r. v.'s "when it is full-grown"! And how very, very awkward! When, pray, is sin full-grown, and when not? After it becomes sin, is there a period of waiting until it is full-grown, before it "brings forth Death"? For elsewhere we read, that in the day of sin the sinner dies (Gen. 2: 17); nay, that he dies in his iniquity (Ezek. 33: 8, 9, 12). Surely St. James would never have said, The wages of sin when it is full-grown becomes Death. With St. Paul he would rather have said, "The wages of sin is Death" (Rom. 6: 23), without any conditions. In his next chapter he reasons that whether a sin be little or great,—respect of persons only, or adultery, or murder, or a lack of faith or works,—the sinner is answerable for all; that is, incurs the penalty of Death, the one penalty, whether the offence be one of slight degree or against every command of the law. For the word used in Jas. 2: 10 is not "guilty," although repeatedly rendered so in the N. T.; but answerable, responsible, etc. If we commit sin, we violate the law as a whole, and are responsible accordingly. The best translation of 1: 15, from what is said above, is, "and sin, when it is born" or "begotten," etc. It would be a figurative rendering, but would be true to the metaphors of the apostle.

<sup>1</sup> In the use of *dosis* and *dorema* in immediate connection both a difference and a relation between them are implied; but what, the words hardly indicate; for both are used for a gift. Perhaps *dosis* is the gift of Life and its powers, and *dorema*, the gift of the Spirit inspiring their use. This would show the divine gift of Life, as a "good gift," which becomes a "perfect gift," when the lustful life is destroyed.

<sup>2</sup> Or "some beginning of fruits." The expression, repeatedly used, sounds like the gospel of all creation.

asks: "Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, Doth the spirit which He hath caused to dwell in us yearn with envy?" 4: 5. In these examples, then, we are taught, as usual, how all good is from the good God above, of whose will, which knows not a shadow of change, the good Life in us has been begotten; and whose purpose, accordingly, in begetting that Life is unalterable. And we are further taught of the evil factor in us all which "no one" should charge to be of God. And because of these things, and their universal application, the sacred writer exhorts "every man"<sup>1</sup> to develop his good Life, and restrain and put away the evil. This double nature in us the Bible sometimes indicates in a single sentence, thus: "The wages of sin is Death; but the free gift of God is eternal Life in Jesus Christ our LORD." Rom. 6: 23. "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order." 1 Cor. 15: 22, 23. "We know that we are of God, and the whole world (the wicked nature of every man) lieth in that evil"—*i. e.* Death. 1 John 5: 19. "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pretentiousness of life,<sup>2</sup> is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." 2: 16, 17. These things were said after the descent of the Spirit: and they include us all. Upon "all flesh" the Spirit descended, conferring upon all from the beginning the immortal nature of God. And yet, because in "the whole world" there is "the lust of the flesh," the world in its carnal nature "passeth away." "For in many things we all stumble." Jas. 3: 2. "There is not a righteous man, not even one." Rom. 3: 10. Since we all therefore lie prostrate in the evil of Death, how hopeless would be our case, but for the nature begotten in the world through Him who was sent to be its Saviour! And of that nature it is said, "We know (for the child of God must be holy) that whosoever has been begotten of God sinneth not; but he that has been begotten of God keepeth himself, and that evil (the Death which had been mentioned just before) toucheth him not." 5: 18.

7. In all this teaching the apostles are echoing that of our LORD. For in the first place He taught the multitude to say, "Our Father, who art in Heaven" (Matt. 6: 9; 23: 9. Luke 11: 2); while on another occasion He addressed the Jews, the members of the elder church, and many of them in all likelihood the same individuals whom He taught more than once that God was their

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<sup>1</sup> Jas. 1: 19.

<sup>2</sup> The natural life, *bios*, not *zoe*, which is used for the better life.

Father,<sup>1</sup> as follows: "I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you.<sup>2</sup> I speak what I have seen of my Father, and ye do what ye also have seen of your Father. . . . If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. . . . Ye do the works of your father. . . . If God were your Father, ye would love me. . . . Why do ye not understand my speech? Because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will to do. . . . He that is of God heareth the words of God: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God." John 8: 37-39, 41-44, 47. In all these words of Jesus note the apparent contradictions, and how readily they are reconciled in the two natures. Men are, and are not, of God, and are, and are not, of Abraham. St. Peter afterwards, it may be noted in connection with these words of the Master, addressed these Jews, even the ones who finally had become His crucifiers, telling them of the resurrection and session of Jesus at the right hand of God, and that He should remain on that seat of power, until His foes should be made His footstool; and exhorting them to repent, because, notwithstanding their terrible sin, the promise was unto them and to their children. And in a second address the apostle encourages them to the same effect, saying unto them, "Ye are the sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you in turning away every one of you from your iniquities." Acts 3: 25-26. When, therefore, our Saviour told these Jews that they could not hear or understand His word, and were children of the devil, why did He address them at all? And why did St. Peter follow Him in so doing? And yet of them the apostle gained believers. The questions are answered in St. Peter's address. Because that in the seed of Abraham all are blessed, "every one." That is to say, Christ died for all.<sup>3</sup> In Him, who is the seed of Abraham all are "born from above." "For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the bondmaid, and one by the freewoman. But he of the bondmaid was born as flesh; and he of the freewoman through the promise. Which things are told as an allegory. . . . Now we, brethren, like Isaac,

<sup>1</sup> Owing, perhaps, to St. John's awkwardness of expression, or to the universality of the duality, those addressed are said to be both believers and unbelievers. Cf. 8: 30-34, etc., with 8: 44-46. At all events, both classes were present.

<sup>2</sup> Or, "no room (r. v., not free course) in you";—*i. e.*, while the evil nature is dominant.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Cor. 5: 14, 15.

are children of promise. But as then he that was born as flesh, persecuted him (that was born) as spirit, even so (it is) now. But what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not inherit with the son of the freewoman. So then, brethren, we are not children of a bondwoman, but of the freewoman. In the freedom (in which) Christ hath set us free stand fast therefore, and be not entangled again with a yoke of bondage." Gal. 4: 22-24, 28-31; 5: 1. I will add here another passage illustrative of those who cannot possibly receive the word of the LORD. St. Paul writes again: "But we have received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from God; that we should know the things which have been freely given us of GOD. Which things also we speak, not in words taught of man's wisdom, but in those taught of the Spirit; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of GOD: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, and is himself judged of none." 1 Cor. 2: 12-15.

8. What a wonderful book must that be, whose very contradictions, as the natural man sees them, are notes of supernatural harmony! And amid what a maze of seeming confusion are these notes of the many writers, however uncultivated, distinctly sounded forth without the least discord. Who can parallel such harmony of deep spiritual utterances among so many, by the most careful selection in any age of uninspired, independent writers, especially of those who have not been assisted by the Bible.<sup>1</sup> It is, for example, but one of the consistent revelations of the sacred writers, to unite in telling, although in ever so great diversity of ways, of the world foredoomed to Death, and at the same time of the world whose Life is everlasting. But to understand them the better, we must observe the careful distinctions which they make both in nature and derivation, between the world which is mortal and that which is immortal; and, in particular, must keep in mind, that the better nature, being absolutely sinless because of its divine sonship, cannot be guilty of unbelief; and that, of logical consequence, this must be true, not only of those whom we call believers, who have an intellectual understanding of truth, but of the worst and youngest of our race, or of all who have been redeemed from Death and justified unto Life. On the other hand, until our evil nature is finally destroyed, we are all, because thereof, under judgment, and are styled "children of promise."<sup>2</sup> And, with exceeding care, the promise is so made as to show that while given to every

<sup>1</sup> And even, indeed, of those who have been.

<sup>2</sup> Gal. 4: 28.



man, it is only given in respect of his better nature. The universality thereof is very pronounced, but is so inseparably joined with that which tells of limitation, as to breed confusion; even making some Christians to be unconditional universalists, and others to imagine that the Almighty Father has failed in His purpose in sending into the world its intended Saviour, and only succeeded in saving a few! The language of the several writers, however, is strongly guarded in both directions, stimulating hope, and yet arousing fear; telling unmistakably of "the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, . . . who mind earthly things,"<sup>1</sup> and as confidently of the eternal Life of the child of God, or of "the believer," and therein of all men. To give examples: "For God so loved the world, that He hath given His only begotten Son, that whosoever<sup>2</sup> believeth in Him should not perish, but should have eternal Life. For God hath not sent His Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world through Him should be saved. He that believeth in Him is not judged; but he that believeth not hath been judged already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the judgment that the light (the new man in Christ) hath come into the world, and men have loved the darkness (their old man) rather than the light; for their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he that doeth the truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made visible;<sup>3</sup> because they have been wrought in God." John 3: 16-31. "In Him (Christ) was Life; and the Life was the Light of men. And the Light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness hath not taken it in. . . . (That) was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own (things or possessions), and His own (people)<sup>4</sup> received Him not. But as many as<sup>5</sup> received Him, to them gave He a nature<sup>6</sup> to have been begotten children

<sup>1</sup> Phil. 3: 18, 19.

<sup>2</sup> Gr. "every one that."

<sup>3</sup> See Matt. 5: 16.

<sup>4</sup>The first "His own" is neuter, the second masculine in the Gr.

<sup>5</sup>As usual, "as many as" signifies all. In the very same chapter we learn that "of His fulness have we all received"; and that He "lighteth every man"; shining on our dark nature, which, however, can take in no light.

<sup>6</sup> Or, "a high dignity," or, "a perfect nature." The word is *exousia*. Ordinarily it denotes, 1. power, might, means, authority, qualification; 2. an office of dignity, lordship; 3. license, arrogance,

of God,—to them that believe in His name; which were begotten, not of blood, nor of the will of flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. . . . And of His (Christ's) fulness have *we all* received, and grace for Grace." John 1: 4, 5, 9-13, 16. "Reliable is the saying and worthy of all acceptation. For therefore we labour and suffer reproach, because we have set our hope on a living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of them that are faithful. These things command and teach." 1 Tim. 4: 8-11.

9. The relation of the subject to the Unpardonable Sin has already been noticed. For as the new man cannot sin, so in the old man, or, as St. Paul says, "in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing."<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, the old man cannot please God,<sup>2</sup> and as an irreconcilable enemy is doomed by Him to Death. That is to say, the old man as the creator of sinfulness constitutes in himself the Unpardonable Sin. He is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be,<sup>3</sup> and so, being in perpetual enmity with God and His Holy Spirit, and utterly, hopelessly ruined, he is doomed to Death. It is not that his acts of sin of themselves bring upon him his doom; but because his nature is such that he can never be otherwise than lawless. For acts of sin we read: "We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous: and He is a propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world." 1 John 2: 1, 2. On the other hand, the apostle who uttered these words, said also: "There is a sin unto Death: not for this do I say that he (any one of us) should pray. All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto Death." 5: 16, 17. To give the words of Jesus Himself: "But if I by the Spirit of God cast out your (lit. *the*) demons, then is the kingdom of God come upon you. Else how can one enter into the house of the strong

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*pomp*; 4. abundance of means, resources; etc. The component word *ousia* denotes, 1. *one's substance, property, resources, means*; 2. *being, existence*; 3. *essence, true nature, reality, true inwardness*. The preposition *ek* in composition, (as is the case here,) gives with words in general either the sense of 1. *from, out of, forth, off, away*, etc., or 2. of completeness, as *perfectly, utterly*, etc. Hence in *exousia* the sense of "*abundance of means*." That of "*a high dignity*" accords well with the more usual meanings; as does "*a perfect nature*" with those of *ousia*, particularly as strengthened by *ek*; and both also with the context—"to them has He given a high dignity (or, *a perfect nature*) to have been begotten children of God." See the exceedingly discordant renderings of the a. v. (power) and r. v. (right).

<sup>1</sup> Rom. 7: 18.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. 8: 8.

<sup>3</sup> Rom. 8: 7.

(demon),<sup>1</sup> and make spoil of his possessions,<sup>2</sup> except he first bind the strong (demon), and then shall he make spoil of his house. He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth. Wherefore I say unto you, All sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the spirit's blasphemy (*i. e.*, sinfulness)<sup>3</sup> shall not be forgiven unto men:<sup>4</sup> and whosoever

<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, "Beelzebub, the prince of the demons," or Satan. See vv. 24-27. Jesus does not accordingly say, "the strong man," but simply, "the strong," the adjective referring to the word "demon" just previously mentioned. To render "the strong (one)" is too indefinite, but it is better than to supply "man" where an evil spirit is intended.

<sup>2</sup> It does not seem proper to entitle the devil's belongings "goods." These belongings are the evil natures and acts of sin in us all. The Greek word used means *vessels* or *implements*, *utensils*, *chattels*, *stores*, *possessions* or *belongings*, *goods*, *wares*, *things*, etc. It is also applied to living beings in both a good and a bad sense. See Acts 9:15; Rom. 9:21-23, etc. Men of ignoble condition are called by this word one's *tools* or *chattels*. And this would seem to be the idea here. Enslaved by our evil natures, the devil holds us with "strong" grip; but of these "tools" the Stronger than he comes to despoil him (Luke 11:22). It is said as an equivalent "make spoil of his house." The word "house" also means "family." Its corresponding significance is patent; for Satan's family are also his tools.

<sup>3</sup> In English "the blasphemy of the spirit" is ambiguous, signifying either "the spirit's blasphemy," or "the blasphemy against the spirit"; which latter would be incorrect. For in the Greek there is no "against" or other preposition and the meaning is beyond question. It is simply the genitive (our possessive) case; and is literally either form of the genitive—either "the spirit's blasphemy" or "the blasphemy of the spirit" in a like sense. In the next verse, however, "against" is used; for there it is no longer the blasphemy of the unholy spirit, which is spoken of, but the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. But why this should have led to the previous mistranslation, when the Greek is so very plain, is a wonder. And the egregious mistranslation has stood unchallenged for centuries!

<sup>4</sup> Note the distinction between "all sin and blasphemy" as forgiven, and "the spirit," demon, or child of the devil, who commits the blasphemy, whose blasphemy cannot be forgiven. In the one case we have an act. This is pardonable. In the other the doer of the act, whose condition is unpardonable. If our personal identity were limited to the doer of the act, it could not be said that the

shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit,<sup>1</sup> it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this life (*æon*), nor in that to come. Either make the tree good, and its fruit good; or make the tree corrupt, and its fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by its fruit. Ye offspring of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. The good man out of the good treasure<sup>2</sup> bringeth forth the good things; and the evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in a day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." Matt. 12:28-37.

10. These utterances proclaim Jesus to be casting out the demons in men by the Spirit of God; and that the act proves His kingdom to have come upon men. The Divine Speaker does not declare that kingdom merely to have come, but to have come upon those addressed—"upon you"; that is, upon all, even the cavilling unbelievers, who at that very time were calling His casting out of the demons the work of "Beelzebub, the prince of the demons." And yet, even upon them the kingdom had come; for of the Son of God and the Spirit they too were born; and they had accordingly been made children of God and heirs of His kingdom. Still, although this was the case, the casting out of a devil from one of them illustrated the existence in men also of a very different nature, which Jesus declared to have emanated from Satan.<sup>3</sup> The application to us all of what He was doing and saying becomes the more apparent as we follow His discourse. He had told us expressly that the casting out of the devil showed the kingdom of God to have come; and He goes on to say in substance, that if this were

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act should be forgiven; for surely there is no forgiveness where we ourselves are never pardoned. But for the two natures therefore, there would be a contradiction. As it is, we are pardoned all sin and blasphemy, but not our evil nature.

<sup>1</sup> To speak against the Holy Spirit is to be in continual resistance to His sanctifying power. It is "the spirit's blasphemy" again; and we all in our evil natures are the speakers. Hence it is those natures which are said never to be forgiven, and which in consequence must be destroyed.

<sup>2</sup> The preponderance of authority omits "of the heart." Still, whether we speak of the heart or the evil treasure, we have a comparison of the evil nature and in the good treasure of the good nature, and of the deeds of each.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. 12:24-27.

not the case, how could the strong one, that is, the prince of the devils, have been despoiled by Him of his belongings? It behooved one though, in order to accomplish this despoiling, to go right into the house where the strong one had taken up his abode, and bind him. Yet although by casting out a devil, He continues, I show myself to be stronger than the prince of the devils,<sup>1</sup> and able to do all this, a great deal remains for men to do, and in the doing of which, I can do nothing; but must judge them according to their deeds.<sup>2</sup> They must aid me, or they will be against me and my purpose. For if my good seed is sown where it shall not be cultivated the condition of the man will be all the worse for what I accomplish in giving him salvation from Death.<sup>3</sup> Of all things then, do your part in the work, and with exceeding care. "When the unclean spirit is gone out of the man, he passeth through waterless places, seeking rest; and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out. And having come, he findeth it empty, swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh along with himself seven other spirits more evil than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man becometh worse than the first. So shall it be also unto this evil generation" (Matt. 12:43-45. See also Luke 11:24-26). Wherefore I say unto you, There is indeed pardonable sin; but there is also that which is unpardonable. For because of the propitiation which I make for the world, *all* sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; so that they shall be redeemed from the Death which was their due, and shall live for ever. But you have that unclean spirit within you, derived from below, which is the instigator of all your sin and blasphemy. The blasphemy of that spirit, or your Sinfulness, shall not be forgiven unto men. To make you clean and sinless, you must therefore cast out the unclean spirit; just as I cast out the one which was blind and dumb. For your better understanding I repeat: Who shall speak a word against the Son of Man, that is, whosoever shall, even to an idle word, be the doer of a wrongful deed, it is done against me, for I have taken unto myself the burden thereof, and it shall be forgiven him. But before men are meet to be received into heaven, they must be sanctified; and the Holy Ghost is their Sanctifier. The spirit of the devil, however, within them is utterly incapable of

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<sup>1</sup> Luke 11:21, 22.

<sup>2</sup> John 5:30. See § 26.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. 13:1-9; 26:24. Heb. 10:29. Of course, Jesus does more for men than save them from Death; for He sends the Spirit and the judgment according to deeds. But it is to our forgiveness from all sin because of His Life and Death to which He now refers.



sanctification; and so long as that unholy spirit remains within any man, or is at all a part of his being, the man will be, to a greater or less degree, in resistance to the Holy Spirit and His sanctifying work. Whosoever then shall speak against the Holy Spirit, that is, even again to an idle word, shall exhibit a sinful condition, it shall never be forgiven him, neither here nor hereafter. If Jesus had not expressly spoken, in connection with the casting out of demons which had emanated from their prince, of an evil spirit within men which is the instigator of the blasphemy that could not be forgiven them, His words with greater reason might appear to some to be contradictory. For along with His declaration of an unpardonable sin, He expressly states that all or every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men. Moreover, if a man is to suffer for a sin, then to the full extent of his sufferings he is not pardoned, nor is the sin forgiven. But if the unpardonable sin applies to us in respect of the evil nature in us all, or is our Sinfulness, as has been the name usually given to it in this volume, then the consistency of the words of Jesus becomes manifest; and we realise that when a man gets rid of that evil nature which is essentially Sinful, he gets rid also of the unpardonable sin. The man will then have but the one immortal nature, begotten in Him of God, and *all* sin and blasphemy, into which his former evil nature shall have led him, shall be forgiven him; while that nature itself, whose blasphemy shall never be forgiven, will have received its mortal doom. And let us observe the universal intent expressed in the language of Jesus in regard, first, to pardonable, and then, to unpardonable sin. He speaks in both cases alike of men in general; as though all alike had not only pardonable sins and blasphemies, but also the blasphemy which is unpardonable. For just as "all sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men,"—that is, unto us all,—so, He says, "the spirit's blasphemy shall not be forgiven unto men"; or unto the same men as before,—that is again, unto us all. The guilt seems as universal in the one clause as in the other; only it is forgiven in the one case, and not in the other. The possibility of the unpardonable guilt of all, though only of some in fact, is not a sufficient answer to this. For in the first place there is a universal intent all through the context. Even to the hostile Jews who had dared to charge Him with being the tool of Beelzebub, He declared that their words against Himself should be forgiven; but not, He added, "the spirit's blasphemy"; meaning evidently, that which had emanated from the unclean spirit within each man. In the second place, the very statement introduces inconsistency; for it makes all men pardonable, and at the same time some men unpardonable. And in the third place, it makes the words "unto men" in the second clause unnecessary,

as though they were but a play of language to give similarity to the clauses. Indeed, the interpretation, applying the clause to only a part of men, would be made somewhat more certain without them; and would be still more strengthened, although even then not made conclusive, if instead of applying the clause unto men in general, after the manner of the preceding clause, the reading had been, "but the spirit's blasphemy shall not be forgiven unto those who have such a spirit." But even so, the reading would still be consistent with the unclean spirit being in all, and the clause might be as universal in intent as is the apparently limited expression which follows, to wit, "Whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man"; which expression, however, includes all sin borne by our Lord, and of course all sinners. From every point of view, therefore, the more satisfactory interpretation of the two clauses is, that the guilt spoken of in each applies not possibly, but actually, to us all; and that it is pardonable in the one case, but not in the other; and that while that which is pardonable comprises all sin and blasphemy it is the Sinfulness from which they spring, which is caused by the evil spirit within the man, which is unpardonable.

THE END











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